
ISSUES:

The Seventh-day
Adventist Church
and
Certain Private
Ministries



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ISSUES: THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH AND CERTAIN PRIVATE MINISTRIES

INTRODUCTION

From our beginnings as Seventh-day Adventists we have never considered ourselves to be just another church, but rather a divinely called movement, raised up to proclaim the good news of Christ's second coming and to tell the world how to get ready for that glorious event. One of our 27 fundamental beliefs states:

The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness.¹

As Seventh-day Adventists, we pursue this mission in general through an organized structure of churches, local conferences, union conferences, divisions, and the General Conference. Incorporated into these entities are various church-sponsored institutions and ministries dealing with areas such as education, publishing, health care, and broadcast media. In addition, however, a number of "private," "independent," or "special" ministries (see Appendices I and II) have arisen from time to time whose purpose is to assist in fulfilling the mission of the church but who stand outside the regular organizational structure.

Overall, our denomination has been richly blessed by these private ministries. They accomplish tasks that the organized church cannot do because of financial and personnel limitations. Most of these have worked in harmony with the official organization, usually having denominational leaders or prominent lay members on their board of directors. We are grateful to the committed men and women who give so unselfishly of their time and means to operate these independent ministries.

In a few cases, however, private ministries have worked at cross-purposes (see Appendix III) with the organized church, have become destructively critical of the leadership of the church, have undermined the confidence of members in the organized body, and have drained away

funds from the mission of the church. This presents a serious challenge to the health of the church membership.

At the present time several specific issues may be raised concerning these dissident groups: 1. They accuse the Adventist Church of apostasy from the historic faith because the church does not accept their interpretation of certain theological positions. 2. They accuse denominational leadership of collusion in apostasy because they do not squelch teachings that the dissidents find offensive. 3. They accuse the ministry of introducing worldly, and even immoral, practices into the church, and denominational leadership of approving of these practices. 4. They seek to set up a "church within the church," a true and purer remnant that will remain when the apostates (those who disagree with them) will be shaken out. 5. Their methods result in loyal Adventist members sending tithe to them rather than to the church. These concerns will be elaborated upon and documented in Chapter 1.

The purpose of this document is to respond to this challenge in a careful, reasoned statement. To do this, we will examine several dissident private ministries to demonstrate how they are out of harmony with God's plan for His established church. Other chapters will deal with the body of beliefs that constitutes "historic Adventism," the experience of Ellen White in dealing with critical groups in her day, and the biblical teachings about the nature of the church.

Examination of Certain Private Ministries

With this background the present document turns to the examination of certain private ministries to determine if they are loyal to the church and contribute to its mission or if they are divisive—undermining confidence in the church and its leadership and draining away its resources and vitality.

Chapter 1 will look at two closely allied groups: Hope International and Hartland Institute. Hope International is a private ministry led by Ron Spear. It has been a source of some conflict within local congregations, not only within the Washington Conference, where its headquarters are located, but also in many areas of the world field. The issues generally revolve around control of the church

boards and what will be presented from the pulpit and in Sabbath school classes. Hope International also holds a series of camp meetings each year that compete with conference camp meetings and allow it to expose Adventist members to its particular message. The major impact of Hope International, however, comes through a monthly journal, *Our Firm Foundation*, which is sent to a large number of denominational workers and leading lay members, many of them receiving it on a complimentary basis. The journal is edited by Ron Spear and is made up of reprints from Ellen White material and articles by those associated with Hope International.

Hartland Institute is a self-supporting Adventist college in Virginia. The president, Dr. Colin Standish, represents the extreme conservative wing of Adventism. While the college was once well regarded by church leadership, Standish has become increasingly critical of denominational leadership and practices. He has aligned himself with Spear, of Hope International, and has become a contributor to *Our Firm Foundation*. Chapter 1 presents a number of quotations from this journal as evidence that Spear, Standish, and their followers are dividing the church and destroying confidence in its leadership.

Chapter 2 takes a look at Prophecy Countdown, a Florida-based, independent television ministry. Prophecy Countdown is led by John Osborne, who was formerly an unordained pastor for the Florida Conference but who went independent in 1985.

Osborne has sought out certain alleged faults and failures in various church leaders and institutions and broadcast them widely through videotapes. Some of the accusations seem to be groundless. Others have a basis in fact, but they are blown out of proportion in the telling. The key point, however, is Osborne's use of this material to turn Adventists against their church and to win support for himself. Specific points will be detailed in Chapter 2.

Historic Adventism

One of the charges frequently made by the divisive private ministries is that the church has apostatized and therefore is no longer worthy of support. "Apostasy" in this context refers to a departure from doctrines held by Adventists in their early days. In other words, the critics charge, the Adventist Church was founded on a Bible-based theology, but as time has gone by, the church has surrendered some of these beliefs and now holds, in some aspects, a theology that is not biblical but that mirrors that of the "fallen" Protestant churches.

In order to respond fairly to this charge, it is necessary to determine what constitutes "historic Adventism." If it can first be established what beliefs comprised Adventist theology in its beginnings, then it will be possible to determine if the church has altered its position. Chapter 3 pre-

sents a comprehensive study on the composition of historic Adventism. It demonstrates the content of the "ancient landmarks" and shows how they interrelate with "present truth."

Ellen White and Dissidents

Divisive criticism of the church and its leadership is not a new phenomenon to Adventism. Indeed, even before the denomination had officially organized, breakaway groups appeared. Since a number of dissident movements occurred during the long-term ministry of Ellen G. White, it is instructive to see how she met these challenges. Her writings and her example furnish guidelines for the church today when it is called upon to deal with private ministries that threaten to pull apart the church.

In Chapter 4 historical material is presented to show how Ellen White related to three challenges to church unity: (1) the Messenger and Marion parties of the 1850s, (2) the "reforms" of A. W. Stanton and W. F. Caldwell of the 1890s, and (3) the John Harvey Kellogg crisis of the early 1900s.

The Church in the Bible

Seventh-day Adventists take the concept of "church" very seriously, for Scripture makes it clear that God has called His people out of the world and formed them into a fellowship with Himself. One of the 27 fundamental beliefs states:

The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world; and we join together for worship, for fellowship, for instruction in the Word, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, for service to all mankind, and for the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. The church derives its authority from Christ, who is the incarnate Word, and from the Scriptures which are the written Word. The church is God's family; adopted by Him as children, its members live on the basis of the new covenant. The church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ Himself is the Head. The church is the bride for whom Christ died that He might sanctify and cleanse her. At His return in triumph, He will present her to Himself a glorious church, the faithful of all the ages, the purchase of His blood, not having spot or wrinkle, but holy and without blemish.²

Though each individual must personally accept the salvation that has been provided, both the Old and the New Testaments make clear that God works in the world through His organized church. "God has a church upon the earth who are His chosen people, who keep His commandments. He is leading, not stray offshoots, not one here and one there, but a people."³

Therefore, it is a very serious thing to criticize and tear down the church and to undermine confidence in its leaders. This is not to say that leaders and members are without fault or that serious mistakes are not sometimes made in the administration of the church. Though divinely called, the church is composed of human beings—and thus imperfect. Still it is God's church and His leaders. "The church, enfeebled and defective, needing to be reproofed, warned, and counseled, is the only object upon earth upon which Christ bestows His supreme regard."⁴ A full exposition of the doctrine of the church is found in Chapter 5.

A world of difference exists between the constructive and loving reproof given by loyal members and the destructive and harsh criticism given by dissidents. The result of the former is to build up and strengthen the church. The outcome of the latter is to divide and destroy. The work of the private ministries must be judged by this standard.

Spirit of This Document

This document is not presented in a spirit of combat or hostility. The denomination holds no ill will toward Spear, Standish, Osborne, or their followers. Church leadership would be happy to see these groups join with them and use

their energy and influence to assist the church in fulfilling its mission as most independent ministries have done and are doing.

The church speaks out through this document only because it senses a danger to the spiritual life of its members and to the resources needed to proclaim the gospel. If members lose confidence in the church and its leaders, they may well become discouraged and drop out—to their eternal loss. If members become disillusioned, they may well withdraw both financial support and personal commitment, with the result that the church will be weakened in its attempts to complete its mission.

So the church must act to protect itself. But it acts out of love and concern, not out of malice. The church does not attempt to dictate the beliefs or work of these private ministries. It asks only for the courtesy and charity that any genuine Christian would afford a fellow member.

REFERENCES

¹ Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . : A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 1988), p. 152.

² *Ibid.*, p. 134.

³ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1944), p. 61.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

CHAPTER 1

HOPE INTERNATIONAL/HARTLAND INSTITUTE

Why do some private ministries find themselves in opposition to the organized church? They probably did not start out that way. For example, Ron Spear, the leader of Hope International, is a retired ordained minister and has served as a pastor in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and a field representative for the *Adventist Review*. Colin Standish, president of Hartland Institute, at one time served as president of Columbia Union College. While both men represented the conservative end of the Adventist spectrum, no doubt existed as to their loyalty to the church.

The Pathway to Disaffection

People who are strongly committed to their religious beliefs, as these men are, perceive a need to emphasize their particular concerns beyond the opportunities provided by their regular denominational positions. Setting up an independent ministry allows them to devote full attention to the points of faith and practice that they deem especially important and that they perceive to be particularly neglected in the church.

Thus Ron Spear, recognized as a major influence and leader of Hope International, employs Hope International as a leavening influence in Adventism and launched *Our Firm Foundation* as its voice. Spear had broad support from the conservative wing of the church for a magazine that more fully spoke its language and featured articles that appealed to its spiritual needs. The magazine was filled with nostalgic memories of the past and with reprints from the nineteenth century, especially by Ellen G. White. Adventist Forums had successfully published a journal to meet many of the needs of the other pole of the church; the *Adventist Review* had occupied the broad middle ground; now there was a representative magazine for the conservative wing. His stated purpose was to cooperate with denominational leaders and help lead a spiritual renewal in the church.

The following statement appears in the masthead of the very first issue of *Our Firm Foundation* and has remained throughout succeeding issues of the journal:

It is the mission of Hope International and the editors of *Our Firm Foundation* to give the straight testimony [understood as the Laodicean message] and to present Christ and Him crucified. The days that yet remain of this world are few, and what we must do we must do quickly. We must boldly proclaim the truths that place us on so firm a foundation in the midst of this troubled world.¹

Colin Standish started Hartland Institute with one of the strongest support bases ever developed for an Adventist self-supporting institution. Hundreds of Adventists backed the purchase of beautiful property in central Virginia to start a new college that would meet the needs of conservative Adventist families. Hundreds of thousands of dollars flowed in to pay for the land and to erect and remodel buildings. Here was a school that would live by its understanding of the Ellen G. White counsels and provide training for both denominational workers and lay missionary leaders for the church.

What went wrong? In less than a decade, why are both Spear and Standish fighting the church, seeking to undermine its leadership, and attempting to divert its resources into their own organizations? How could such promising enterprises become a problem so quickly?

Note that both Hope International and Hartland are what might be called “reform ministries” rather than “out-reach ministries.” Not that such ministries are not needed. The church is continually in need of reform. But “reformers” sometimes become obsessed with one or a few points that come to have paramount importance to them (see Appendix IV). If the church as a whole does not accept their particular message, they may tend to see this as a sign of insensitivity to the leadings of the Spirit—and finally as apostasy.

The beginnings of this may be noted in an additional statement of mission that first appeared in volume 3 of *Our Firm Foundation*:

Hope International is a special ministry intended to assist in the God-given work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We believe this Remnant Church of Bible prophecy has been brought into existence by the calling of the Lord, and we look for its final triumph in purity at the second coming of Christ. That the church does not now perfectly reflect the will of our Lord is cause for sorrow, but not for discouragement. The Word of God stands pledged that all within her borders will be sifted and tried, and though the greater portion will fail the test, there will yet remain a remnant to honor the Lord by their obedience to all His commands. Therefore, Hope International urges upon all the duty of supporting the Seventh-day Adventist Church in every way possible, insofar as is consistent with the principles of the government of God and the leading of His Holy Spirit upon the heart.²

Thus at an early stage the journal reveals an awareness

that loyalty to God—as those associated with Hope International understand it—may force them to withdraw support for the church. The foundation is laid for a separatist movement, or at least a smaller and “purer” church within the larger organization. This concept is present here only in embryonic form, but, as will be seen, it swiftly became full-blown.

Charges of Heresy in the Church

While the differences that Hope International and Hartland Institute have with the church extend to certain practices, they are grounded in theology. In order to follow the pathway that led these once-loyal members into disaffection, it will be helpful to examine some articles from *Our Firm Foundation* (see Appendix V).

Especially relevant is an article written by Ralph Larson, a retired Adventist pastor and Bible teacher. Larson, who spent his professional life in the employ of the church, has become increasingly critical of it. He seems to function as the “resident theologian” for Hope International. Larson’s article is entitled “Heresies Will Come In.”³ The introduction states that Larson “continues a series which he began last month on the current Adventist apostasy.”

Larson begins by noting that Adventist pioneers established a firm “platform of truth” from their earnest Bible study. He maintains that this platform stood pretty well unshaken until the 1950s, “when the Calvinist theologian Walter Martin succeeded in winning from some of our leaders a concession regarding the humanity of Jesus.” This concession was that “our Lord had come to this earth in the human nature of the unfallen Adam,” rather than our fallen nature, and this new teaching was propagated in the book *Questions on Doctrine*. “The heresies, as had been predicted, began their steady march into our church.”

The second heresy, according to Larson, was “the doctrine of original sin, defined as inherited guilt.”

The third heresy that followed the first two into our church was a perversion of our historic doctrine of righteousness by faith (right doing by means of power received from God) into satanic doctrine of unrighteousness by presumption (wrong doing with the expectation of getting by with it).

The fourth heresy that followed the first three into our church was a denial of our sanctuary doctrine. . . . As was reported in our first article regarding the great Adventist apostasy, a survey conducted in the largest North American Conference revealed that a substantial percentage of the ministers in that conference are now rejecting our sanctuary doctrine.

The fifth heresy that follows in the chain reaction is rejection of the Spirit of Prophecy. . . . With five

major planks gone, how long can the structure stand, and which doctrine will be the next to be torn out and replaced by a false doctrine of Calvinism? *It might be the Sabbath doctrine.*

Larson thus charges that heresy and apostasy have come into the church, that many Adventist ministers have accepted and preach false doctrine, and that “most of our administrators seem to be looking on either indifferently or benignly.” Thus, “heresy follows heresy in a steady march into the church . . . in the great Adventist apostasy.”

This has, of course, created division, because not all of our members have been willing to accept these changes and take part in this apostasy. And who is being charged with the responsibility of having created the division? Those who are clinging to our pure historic faith. . . . Remember, it is the heresies that separate, not the truth. [See Chapter 3.]

The Reason for Conflict

While just brief excerpts, these statements are representative of *Our Firm Foundation* in general. Members of Hope International hold theological opinions that differ from many other Adventist members, pastors, and church leaders. Their theological views center on the human nature of Christ (they hold that it was identical to that of the rest of us) and righteousness by faith (they downplay the justification Christ provides through His sacrifice on the cross and emphasize sanctification, which, to them, means achieving a sinless perfection in this life). From these two points an extension is made to the sanctuary in heaven as to the present work of Christ (providing power for overcoming rather than applying the benefits of Christ’s work on the cross). Since they believe that Ellen White supports their particular viewpoints, those who disagree with them are accused of rejecting the Spirit of Prophecy also.

It is not the purpose of this work to provide a theological rebuttal to the views held by members of Hope International. A series of articles by Dr. Norman Gulley presenting a balanced view of the human nature of Christ appeared in the *Adventist Review* in 1990 (see Appendix VI and Fundamental Belief No. 4 in Appendix VII). But the subjects of the nature of Christ and righteousness by faith are not nearly as straightforward as adherents to Hope International would have it appear. Both Scripture and Ellen White contain statements that seem to support varying viewpoints, and these must be held in tension with each other. They provide opportunity for a lifetime of study and prayerful meditation, but no room for dogmatism.

Believing this, the organized church has never taken a position on the human nature of Christ other than to affirm that He was fully human as well as fully divine. Neither

has the church in world session attempted to define righteousness by faith in a way that would upset the balance between justification and sanctification. (See Chapter 3, "Historic Adventism—Ancient Landmarks and the Present Truth," for a detailed study of those points that comprised the "original faith.") The Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists (see Appendix VII), the only official statement of what Seventh-day Adventists believe, do not attempt to define these points precisely. Under the umbrella of commitment to the basic doctrines of the faith, ministers and members hold a variety of views on these issues as each attempts to understand and actualize his/her personal relationship with God. While we may discuss our particular interpretations, and even attempt to persuade others of their validity, we have no authority to demand that others see them exactly as we do or to label those who disagree with us as heretics or apostates.

The heart of the problem is their insistence that leaders, members, and ministers must agree with them or be charged with heresy and that viewpoints that differ from theirs are an evidence of apostasy in the church.

The problem then is not that Hope International holds views that might seem to be extreme or one-sided to many other Adventists. *The heart of the problem is their insistence that leaders, members, and ministers must agree with them or be charged with heresy and that viewpoints that differ from theirs are an evidence of apostasy in the church.* This position leads to severe criticism of church leaders for either accepting theological views that differ from their own or for failing to restrain and discipline those who do hold such views.

Let not our voices or pens show that we are disregarding the solemn injunctions of the Lord. Let no one depreciate those who have been chosen of God, who have fought manfully the battles of the Lord, who have woven heart and soul and life into the cause and work of God, who have died in faith, and who are partakers of the great salvation purchased for us through our precious sin-bearing, sin-pardoning Saviour. God has inspired no man to reproduce their mistakes, and to present their errors to a world that is lying in wickedness, and to a church composed of many who are weak in faith. The Lord has not laid the burden upon men to revive the mistakes and errors of the living or the dead. He would have His laborers present the truth for this time. Speak not of the errors of your brethren who are living, and be silent as to the mistakes of the dead. Let their mistakes and errors remain where God has put them—cast into the depths of the sea. The less that is said by those who profess to believe present truth, in

regard to the past mistakes and errors of the servants of God, the better it will be for their own souls, and for the souls of those whom Christ has purchased with His own blood. Let every voice proclaim the words of the first and the last, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. John heard a voice saying, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."⁴

Much of the difficulty in the present conflict seems to rest in the characteristics of the leaders. Unlike most Adventists, both Spear and Standish have an intolerance for ideas that differ from their own. The Adventist Church preserves unity among a membership of great diversity because it affirms freedom of conscience. As long as a member believes the core doctrines of the church (see Chapter 3 for a definition of these), great liberty exists for individual convictions on other religious points. Spear and Standish cannot understand or allow this freedom. They have a blind spot when it comes to being generous to those who disagree with them. They must always be right, and anyone who differs with them must be wrong. But these "independents" insist that those who do not agree are more than just intellectually wrong—they are also morally wrong. (See Appendix VIII.)

This mind-set, by the way, is not limited to leaders of private ministries. Some regular denominational workers and some lay members, while loyal to the church and not seeking to set up an independent rivalry to it, also have little toleration for those whose theological positions differ from their own in some respects. Such a spirit is antithetical to the unity of the church. As broad-based and heterogeneous as it is, Adventism can hold together only as all of us exhibit respect and tolerance for each other.

Leaders at Hope International are aware that their positions are not represented in the 27 fundamental beliefs, but they consider this statement of faith to be too bland and open to interpretation to be authoritative.

The official Seventh-day Adventist statement of beliefs is couched in such a way that pivotal doctrines such as victorious Christian living, the nature of Christ, and the atonement are left sufficiently general that all but the most rabid New Theology teachers can give confident assent to them. Thus it is hard to take strong action against them.⁵

But that is exactly the point. The united church in session has chosen deliberately to leave some points open because general agreement on specifics does not exist. Nor does this position represent a subtle shift brought in by modernizers. Comparison with earlier statements of belief throughout Adventist history reveals that the church has never been more specific on those issues than in the present

statement. Therefore, what the church teaches today on these subjects cannot be construed as a departure from the "historic faith." (See the full exposition on the development of Adventist beliefs in Chapter 3.)

A great deal is said about the need to present the straight testimony⁶ in order to bring about reform. The expression comes from Ellen White's article "The Shaking" (1857), now published in *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 1, page 181, but she used it numerous times in various settings.

Most commonly she refers to the clear exposition of subjects that constitute the core message of Adventists. But there are other uses as well. The straight testimony will bring openness to the Holy Spirit. It will convict persons of their faults (for example, covetousness).⁷ It will result in spiritual renewal.⁸ However, it must be applied to personal error with a gentle compassion designed to win rather than simply chastise.⁹

What is most striking is that for Ellen White the central application is personal rather than institutional. The straight testimony will draw the responsive believer to a right relationship with Christ. Indirectly the church is benefited when members are renewed.

In attempting to insist on the church accepting their views in order to be "purified," Hope International and Hartland Institute would, in effect, create a new standard of Adventism beyond what the church has seen fit to adopt. But no members or leaders have a right to do that. The standard of Adventism must be a decision of the united church in General Conference session.

Of course, Hope International, or any group, may believe that they are right and the church is wrong. That is their privilege. In that case they might try to persuade the church to restudy the matter and possibly change in their direction, or they could choose to withdraw from the church since they are not in basic harmony with it. But they do not have a right to insist what the church must be and to set themselves up as the standard that all must follow.

Notice where Ralph Larson, rather than acknowledging that Hope International has diverged from mainstream Adventism, puts the blame for the conflict:

Some of the Calvinistic Adventists are becoming increasingly militant and aggressive in their attempts to silence the voices of those *who refuse to join them in apostasy*. . . .

They are raising more and more accusations that *those who refuse to join in their apostasy* are the troublemakers who are causing diversion, splitting churches, and disturbing the peace, harmony, and unity of the church at large.¹⁰

No one is trying to force or even persuade them to alter their theology. It is the other way around. Hope International is trying to force the church to accept its views, and when the church will not do so, its writers charge apostasy and seek to undermine the confidence of the members in church leadership.

Here is an interesting twist. The accusation is that "Calvinistic Adventists" (a term unknown in the church) are trying to force true members to join them in apostasy. Not so! *No one is trying to force or even persuade them to alter their theology. It is the other way around.* Hope International is trying to force the church to accept *its* views, and when the church will not do so, its writers charge apostasy and seek to undermine the confidence of the members in church leadership.

Exaggerated Accusations of Ministry and Leaders

It is a fairly short step from accusations of heresy and apostasy to charges of immoral lifestyle. Notice how Hope International has made that step.

There is no way one can preach the sin-and-live theology without eventually falling into deep sin. Thus *many* of those enamored with the New Theology evidence the emptiness of their "love" theology by their infidelity to their wives and by marital breakup and even drunkenness. The carnage in this area is horrendous.¹¹

Some Adventist ministers have been unfaithful to their spouses, and this is always tragic. To give the impression, however, that adultery and drunkenness are widespread in the Adventist ministry is unfair and untrue. Furthermore, no evidence is introduced to indicate that such violations that may have occurred are related to theological belief. Such statements are calculated to undermine confidence in the church and its leadership. But there is more:

Practices once avoided are now condoned—some with official sanction, many more without it. We face the erosion of bedrock behavioral principles rooted in Scripture and the writings of Ellen White, such as the growing acceptance of the moderate use of alcohol, increased pressure to accept "monogamous" homosexual relationships, and the swelling popularity of jewelry in all its forms.¹²

The Adventist Church at any level of administration never did and does not now officially condone any of these practices. These charges are baseless—calculated to destroy the confidence of members in their pastors and church leaders.

Most administrators are imprisoned by the number of committees that they must attend. Thus their own searching for truth is spasmodic.¹³

According to this charge our denominational leaders are largely uninformed about spiritual issues (and by implication unconsecrated). Therefore, we cannot trust them to guide the church, and must look to those to whom the Lord has given a special message—presumably leaders of Hope International.

Pastors teaching New Theology are *often* told simply to be careful, often with the assurance that leadership is fully behind them.¹⁴

Here it is implied that even when leaders do understand the true issues, they will not take a stand against error because they are in accord with the apostasy. It seems clear that *Our Firm Foundation*:

1. Gives an exaggerated negative emphasis to conditions in the church.
2. Seeks to undermine confidence in the ministry and denominational leadership.
3. Actually bears false witness about the church and its leaders.

Ellen White has given counsel pertinent to this matter:

There are those who pick out from the Word of God, and also from the Testimonies, detached paragraphs or sentences that may be interpreted to suit their ideas, and they dwell upon these, and build themselves up in their own positions, when God is not leading them. Here is your danger. You will take passages in the Testimonies that speak of the close of probation, of the shaking among God's people, and you will talk of a coming out from this people of a purer, holier people that will arise. Now all this pleases the enemy. We should not needlessly take a course that will make differences or create dissension. We should not give the impression that if our particular ideas are not followed, it is because the ministers are lacking in comprehension and in faith, and are walking in darkness.¹⁵

If you differ with your brethren as to your understanding of the grace of Christ and the operations of His Spirit, you should not make these differences prominent. You view the matter from one point; another, just as devoted to God, views the same question from another point, and speaks of the things that make the deepest impression on his mind; . . . how foolish it is to get into contention over these things, when there is really nothing to contend about. Let God work on the mind and impress the heart.¹⁶

A Church Within a Church?

Present evidence does not suggest that Hope International and Hartland Institute seek to break with the Adventist Church and establish their own denomination.

But they are increasingly organizing their followers into a churchlike fellowship within but separate from the denomination. This might be called "a church within a church." The idea seems to be that this little group is the "true remnant" in the midst of the larger group who have departed from the historic faith in both theology and practice. When the "shaking time" comes, the apostate majority will be shaken out, leaving behind the core of true followers who will be ready to meet Jesus because they have perfected their lives through His grace. This true core, of course, is composed of those who have accepted the message of Hope International, Hartland, Steps to Life church, Rolling Hills church, and other such voices of reform.

Notice some of the elements that suggest the "church within a church" concept.

Authoritative Leadership

The New Testament church followed leaders whom God had called and gifted (Acts 6:1-4; Eph. 4:11-13). Ron Spear, founder of Hope International and editor of *Our Firm Foundation*, and Colin Standish, president of Hartland Institute, give every evidence of having achieved such leadership status among their followers. Robert Folkenberg, president of the General Conference, has far less authority and credibility with this group than do Spear and Standish. The *Our Firm Foundation* converts look to these two men, rather than to their church pastors and denominational leaders, for spiritual guidance and doctrinal integrity. This is not to say that Spear and Standish are not sincere Christians, but they are self-appointed to this leadership role and were not commissioned by the regular processes of "gospel order." In this position they pose a rival authority to elected church officers.

In the April 27, 1992, Hartland newsletter Standish states that "the conflict between some in church authority and some members of the church is so great that we must search out God's solutions." He then lists six results of declining credibility (see Appendix IX) and then appeals to laymen and ministers to take part in a reorganization that will "refocus the local conferences, unions and the General Conference." He further states that this represents "a call for a total reevaluation of the governance of our church." It is obvious that he hopes to attract additional pastors and congregations to his influence.

Organization of Local Congregations

The apostles in New Testament times raised up congregations as they traveled from place to place (Acts 14:21-25). In a few instances Hope International has fostered the organizing of local congregations. Examples are in Derby and Winfield, Kansas (see Appendix X). In other cases followers of Hope International have attempted to join existing congregations in large enough numbers to

gain control of the church. An example is Yelm, Washington (see Appendix XI).

Camp Meetings

Hope International holds camp meetings each year to which their followers are invited through the pages of *Our Firm Foundation*.

Camp Meetings at Hope International: With longer days and warmer temperatures, Adventists start thinking about camp meeting. We at Hope International will be hosting our seventh annual camp meeting this summer. The dates for the meetings here at our Eatonville headquarters are **July 17-21**. Other camp meetings are being arranged across the country, so be sure to look for more information concerning these meetings in upcoming issues of *Our Firm Foundation* and in our newsletters.¹⁷

Hartland Institute is also involved. Their newsletter of May 29, 1992, contains this invitation:

PPS: Don't forget to plan on coming to the fifth annual Hartland old-fashioned family Bible camp meeting starting July 29 through August 2. Speakers include Joe Crews, Ron Spear, John Grosboll, Colin Standish, Hal Mayer, Ron Goss, Ray DeCarlo, and more. We are praying for the Holy Spirit to be here in abundance; we pray you will too (see Appendix IX).

These camp meetings stand in competition with those conducted by the conferences of the denomination.

Ordained Pastors

Jesus ordained the twelve disciples for ministry (Mark 3:14). In order to protect the church from "false prophets" (Matt. 7:15), Adventists have established certain qualifications for ordination to the gospel ministry. Among these is approval of the candidate for ordination by the local conference and union conference committees.

Without such approval, at a Steps to Life camp meeting held in Wichita, Kansas, on June 13, 1992, Ralph Larson ordained three lay members as gospel ministers (see Appendix XII). They were John Osborne, speaker for Prophecy Countdown (see Chapter 2), who had been disfellowshipped by the Florida Conference on September 29, 1991 (see Appendix XIII); Robert Trefz, who had been disfellowshipped in July (see Appendix XIII); and Michael Thompson, a graduate of Hartland Institute. (See defense of this action in letter of June 17, 1992, by John Grosboll, Appendix XIII.)

Spear and Standish deny support for this ordination (see Appendix XII), but they set the stage and created the climate for the event. The camp meeting was sponsored by Steps to Life (see Appendix XII), an organization founded by the late Marshall Grosboll, a follower of Hope International and a contributor to *Our Firm Foundation*;

the official conducting the ordination was a valued coworker of Spear and Standish—their theologian, as it were—and those ordained have been prominent speakers at the Hope International and Hartland camp meetings and seminars.

In his ordination sermon Larson explained that true biblical ordination has always been a response to the call of God's people—in this case members of the Rolling Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church (John Osborne's Florida group), the Steps to Life Seventh-day Adventist Church (John Grosboll's church in Wichita, Kansas), and a home church in South Dakota. Despite the titles, each of these are independent churches—not part of the conference organizations.

Larson summed up his message by saying:

Let it be clearly understood that we are NOT doing this in the name of the Seventh-day Adventist organization, or by the authority of the Seventh-day Adventist organization. We are doing this by the scriptural authority of the priesthood of all believers and for the benefit of the needy historic Seventh-day Adventists (see Appendix XII).

Do they have a right to do this? Of course they do. We live in a land with freedom of religion. But this action clearly demonstrates an intention to operate a rival organization to Adventism, a "church within a church." And is this "historic" Adventism? Absolutely not! (See Chapter 3.)

Written Communications to the Churches

Much of the New Testament consists of letters written to Christian congregations by authoritative church leaders. Today Adventist leaders communicate with the membership via various publications, most notably the *Adventist Review*. *Our Firm Foundation*, the monthly journal published by Hope International, is to the followers of Spear and Standish what the *Adventist Review* is to the regular Adventist Church. It is their rallying point for announcements, theological teaching, and unity of the movement. Without this magazine few people in the world would have heard of Spear and Standish, and there would not be a church within the church. Many who read *Our Firm Foundation* regularly consider it their church paper. Every church must be held together by some method of communication. This paper is the glue for the Hope International/Hartland Institute church.

The main thrust of the journal seems to be to win support from Adventists for the positions of Hope International. Thus the appeal: "We are asking our subscribers and supporters to take this special edition to every member of God's church. The hour is late, but the Loud Cry cannot sound until every one has heard and understood God's special message for this hour."¹⁸ The "church within a church" concept is here made apparent.

Baptism of Converts

The New Testament church was commissioned to make disciples and to baptize them into its fellowship (Matt. 28:18-20). In the Adventist Church baptism is administered only to those who are accepted as members of a local congregation. Recently leaders of Hope International and Hartland Institute have begun to baptize converts even though this baptism is not recognized as the basis for membership in the organized church (see Appendix XIV). Thus again the competitive or rival nature of the movement can be discerned.

Tithes and Offerings

According to the Bible plan the church is supported by tithes and offerings. If Hope International/Hartland, or any other organization, seeks tithe for itself, it thrusts at the heart of the individual Christian experience, for it is asking the church member to switch loyalties away from God's plan to a rival plan. This decision creates a fundamental commitment as to on whose side we will place our support and influence. The diversion of tithe from God's storehouse to an independent organization is so fundamental to the "church within a church" concept that it will be considered in more detail in the following section.

Diversion of Tithe

If members can be convinced that the church and its leaders have apostatized, they may no longer wish to support it financially and may begin to return their tithe and other offerings to other ministries. *If Hope International can convince members that the Adventist Church is no longer worthy of support because of apostasy and that members are not required to return their tithe to it (although they are biblically required to tithe), perhaps members will choose to support them.*

The groundwork for this shift in support is laid in an article by Ralph Larson: "The Tithe Problem—Who Is Responsible?"¹⁹ In the introduction the disclaimer is made that "it is not the purpose of this article to solicit funds, or to attempt to point out what one's personal responsibility is." The tone of the article, however, soon belies this disclaimer. Notice some sample statements:

Tithe should always be faithfully returned to the Lord, and all of the tithe should be used for the support of the ministry. But which ministry or what ministry? This is the question that is troubling us now. What if a ministry strays from the path of sacred duty? What if a ministry becomes so theologically confused as to depart from the truths of God's Word and begins preaching a false gospel? What if church leaders begin to use tithe funds for purposes other than the ministry of the Word, . . . even to pay the fees of non-Adventist lawyers? What, then, is our Christian duty?

Larson answers the question by stating that "in neither [Ellen White's] writings nor her practice was there anything to support the view that all tithe, regardless of circumstances, must be paid through regular church channels." Are circumstances now such that members would be justified in returning tithe through other than "regular church channels"?

It would be difficult for any member of the North American Division to be unaware of the great theological apostasy which is at the very heart of the tithe problem. He or she is likely to encounter it in church on any Sabbath morning. . . .

Can it be possible that there are ministers, teachers, and administrators all through our ranks who are under the control of Satan? If the writings of Ellen White are inspired, we have no choice but to believe it.

Having developed the scenario to this point, Larson pictures the dilemma of the faithful church member:

As this heart-wrenching experience continues, the church member is eventually forced to recognize that Ellen White's predictions about the great Adventist apostasy are being fulfilled before his eyes. Then comes the agonizing question, "Does God require me to pay my tithe to support the great apostasy?" . . .

He then turns to an independent ministry holding the Seventh-day Adventist historic faith, preaching the message that he accepted when he joined the church. He now begins to send his tithe to that ministry. . . .

Who is responsible? Has the church member's problem been created by the independent ministry, or by the preaching of the false doctrines of Calvinism in his own church?

Regardless of the opening disclaimer, this is certainly an appeal to send tithe funds to independent ministries. The description of such a worthy ministry leaves no doubt that the reference is to Hope International. Larson knows that this counsel will meet strong resistance from the denomination, but he puts the blame for the situation on the church leadership.

To destroy the independent ministries will not solve the church member's problem, nor will it be solved by cracking whips of church authority over his head, excluding him from church office, or by any other means of coercion.

Notice how Larson makes it appear that church discipline is being exercised against those who give to independent ministries rather than against those who criticize the church and solicit tithe funds. This approach is more likely to raise the defenses of the average member, who doesn't

want to be told what to do with his/her money. Larson concludes:

May we never be confused or uncertain as to who is responsible for the present tithe problem. The responsibility must be placed squarely at the doors of those who are preaching among us the false doctrines of Calvinism and the administrators who are supporting and maintaining them in their positions.

It is not the purpose of this paper to prove that the tithe should be returned through regular organized channels according to both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Roger Coon has ably demonstrated that and revealed the conditions for exceptions in a major article: "Tithe: Ellen White's Counsel and Practice"²⁰ (see Appendix XV). *Our purpose here is to show that Hope International does plead a case for the diversion of tithe funds into their ministry, and the case is predicated on the gross apostasy (according to their definition) in the Adventist Church.*

Admission of the Church Within a Church (see Appendix XVI)

Evidence has been presented that Hope International, with support from certain other ministries, has been seeking to set up a rival or competitive church within the regular Adventist Church. How does it respond to this charge? A recent article in *Our Firm Foundation* addressed the reason independent ministries have arisen in the church:

The one main underlying reason is that some of us want to see the third angel's message go forward. For years we have been stagnant. . . . One other reason these ministries have come into being is our present backsliding as a church, and issues involved with that backsliding. This sad state of affairs has caused an independent backlash. . . . Once again, Independent Ministries are a reaction to the direction in which the church, as a whole, has been heading for the last forty years.²¹

It is quite evident that there are now *two churches under one church name*. To try to keep both sides satisfied will eventually cause the downfall of the whole denominational structure, spiritually and physically.²²

In a later issue John Grosboll explains: "When I say *independent*, I mean independent from the control of the denomination."²³

This is the nub of the Adventist Church's relationship with Hope International/*Our Firm Foundation*. It is not their calling attention to the sins and failures of the church. No true Adventist—leader or laity—approves of the sins and failings that appear at times within the church body. The real problem is that Hope International/*Our Firm Foundation* feels driven to charge the church with being in a state of apostasy because it does not accept their views on

certain debatable theological issues. And the sins and failures of the church are seen as issuing out of this condition as well.

Hartland Institute

Colin Standish, president of Hartland Institute, has joined with Ron Spear and his followers in their criticisms of the church. Because Hope International publishes *Our Firm Foundation*, the charges against it are more easily documented than are those against Hartland. Nevertheless, some evidence is worth noting.

Recently, Outposts Centers International (OCI), a highly respected association of Adventist self-supporting institutions, found it necessary to expel Hartland Institute from its membership because of its lack of loyal support for the church. Then Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries (ASI), the leading Adventist lay organization, also expelled Hartland for the same reasons. Minutes from both organizations documenting these actions can be found in Appendix XVII.

A few years ago Hartland had a board composed of a wide variety of prominent lay church leaders. That board made three demands of Hartland administrators: 1. They were not to receive church tithe. 2. They were not to associate with organizations that were in poor standing with the church. 3. They were not to conduct seminars in churches or communities where the local church or conference requested them not to work. Thus the Hartland board encouraged cooperation with the regular church. However, at the next Hartland constituency meeting all those persons who supported these three points were removed from their board. Since then there has been little or no cooperation between Hartland and the regular church organization (see Appendix XVIII).

Over the years Hartland Institute has attracted dozens of highly skilled and respected staff members who wanted to serve God in a conservative college such as it started out to be. Almost all left disillusioned because they felt that the atmosphere at Hartland was too critical for them to stay with the institution and remain loyal to the Seventh-day Adventist Church (see Appendix XVIII).

Conclusion

Of course, the adherents of Hope International have the right to believe and practice whatever they wish. But their destructive attacks on the ministry and leadership of the church, their attempts to reshape the church according to their theology and to purge out those who would resist them, and their efforts to support their cause by diverting money from the Adventist treasury demonstrate that they cannot be considered members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in good and regular standing. They are not in harmony with the movement. Their efforts are

directed at sabotaging the church and its elected leadership. Evidence presented in this paper reveals that they have had a negative effect on the local congregation, local conferences, union conferences, the North American Division, and the world field. Disregarding the organizational procedures that the church has historically followed, they would appoint themselves as the new leaders and impose their brand of Adventism on everyone. The results of their work will tend to destroy the church, not build it up. All of this forms the basis for church discipline upon those who are associated with this movement.

To have an informal church operating within the regular church is like having active cancer cells in a healthy body. A person diagnosed as having cancer has three options: (1) deny there is a cancer and refuse to recognize the progressive sickness in the body; (2) recognize that there is cancer, ignore medical treatment, and pray that God will work a miracle of healing; (3) recognize that the cancer must be gotten rid of, have it medically treated, and, if possible, have it cut out. All three options have risks, and most people weigh all three options as they face the crisis. But all options are not equally wise. Prudent people pray while they obtain medical help.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church leadership has long ignored the problem with Hope International and Hartland Institute. For years the church has denied the growing evidence that there is a rival church within our body of believers, even when thoughtful observers warned that the criticism was becoming progressively harsher and the influence in the churches more and more negative. The problem has now grown, however, to the point where the church feels forced to take action (see Appendix XIX). The leadership of the denomination has felt it necessary to bar Hope International and Hartland Institute speakers from denomi-

national pulpits, restrict Hope International followers from control of local congregations, and warn members of the negative influence of *Our Firm Foundation*. Denominational leadership is not trying to dictate what adherents of Hope International/Hartland may believe—or even teach. They do have a responsibility to protect the church from destructive criticism and to prevent Hope International/Hartland from gaining control of the church and “purifying” it by purging out those who do not agree with their theology.

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- ⁴ Ellen G. White, in *Review and Herald*, Nov. 30, 1897.
- ⁵ *Our Firm Foundation* 4, No. 6 (June 1989): 17.
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- ⁷ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1948), vol. 3, p. 269.
- ⁸ ———, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1948), p. 307.
- ⁹ ———, *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 270.
- ¹⁰ Larson, p. 20. (Italics supplied.)
- ¹¹ *Our Firm Foundation* 4, No. 6 (June 1989): 17. (Italics supplied.)
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 12.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.* (Italics supplied.)
- ¹⁵ Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1958, 1980), book 1, p. 179. (Italics supplied.)
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 183. (Italics supplied.)
- ¹⁷ *Our Firm Foundation* 6, No. 3 (March 1991): 6. See also vol. 7, Nos. 2, 3.
- ¹⁸ Ron Spear, editorial, *Our Firm Foundation* 2, No. 10 (October 1987): p. 6.
- ¹⁹ Quotations following are from *Our Firm Foundation* 6, No. 9 (September 1991): 20-24.
- ²⁰ *Adventist Review Supplement*, Nov. 7, 1991.
- ²¹ Jeff Reich, “The Church and Special [Independent] Ministries,” *Our Firm Foundation* 5, No. 3 (March 1990): 12, 13.
- ²² *Ibid.*, p. 14. (Italics supplied.)
- ²³ John Grosboll, “Has God Ordained Independent Self-Supporting Work?” *Our Firm Foundation* 7, No. 2 (1992): 8.

CHAPTER 2

PROPHECY COUNTDOWN

As noted in the introduction, John Osborne has been attacking, through personal speaking appointments and through the circulation of videotapes, various Adventist leaders and institutions. Some of his accusations are completely groundless; some are greatly exaggerated or distorted; some may be true. Certainly no Adventist believes that the church and its leaders are perfect. Sincere men and women in authority do make mistakes in judgment, and tares will grow among the wheat until the harvest.

Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is not to demonstrate that Osborne is wrong because he has discovered some failings in the leadership. Rather, he is wrong because of how he has used this material. Instead of following the counsel of Matthew 18 and seeking to correct the erring in a spirit of Christian concern and love, Osborne has been destructively critical of the body—broadcasting widely the alleged faults of pastors, teachers, and leaders, often without bothering even to check personally on the reliability of his information. He has discovered that the more sensational his accusations, the easier it is to gain support from the disgruntled elements of the church.

Examples of Osborne's charges will be examined in some detail in this chapter. Information on his videotapes may be obtained from the North American Division. But first some background on the man and his organization may prove helpful.

A Brief History of Prophecy Countdown

John Osborne entered the ministry as a pastoral intern in the Florida Conference on September 1, 1980. His first assignment was the pastorate of the Arcadia church in southwest Florida. After some time he was transferred to the Naples-Bonita Springs district. In Bonita Springs Osborne met Elder Harold Veach, a retired pastor/evangelist. During his tenure as pastor of the Naples and Bonita Springs churches—under the guidance and encouragement of Elder Veach and the Florida Conference—he began a local television ministry. It seemed to go well, and a national or even an international ministry was envisioned. However, conference leadership felt that they did not have either the commission or the funds to support a major television ministry such as Osborne was contemplating. Osborne left the organized ministry on December 31, 1984,¹ before he qualified for ordination, to continue his quest for a national television ministry. He has not held a ministerial license or ministerial credential in the Florida

Conference since that date.

Insight into the issue of the size of the envisioned Prophecy Countdown ministry is contained in a letter dated September 7, 1984 (see Appendix XX), written by conference president Henry J. Carubba to Osborne. It says:

In the first place, John, the Florida Conference administration, in counsel with the Southern Union Conference and the General Conference leadership, rejected this proposal. This is not to say the opportunity was not worth consideration. However, because Prophecy Countdown has not had sufficient time to become adequately established, we feel the plan is very premature.

As you are aware, we urged you to instead syndicate the program and make it available to those areas where pastors and churches are willing to give it full support. It was only after your apparent unwillingness to follow this counsel that administration reluctantly agreed to wish for your success in your independent venture.

The beginning of Prophecy Countdown is somewhat nebulous because it originated within the Bonita Springs Seventh-day Adventist Church. For some time creditors and church members alike could not distinguish between the two organizations.²

With Prophecy Countdown, finances were a problem from the very first. Money was needed. A system of accepting trusts was organized, and some trusts were accepted by Prophecy Countdown. At least one trust was handled as an irrevocable trust by Prophecy Countdown. Unfortunately, the trustor did not have the same understanding, and demanded his money back.³

A trust was given to the Bonita Springs church in the summer of 1983. It was given:

For promotion and establishment of "good health" facilities on the donated land in Bonita Springs. . . . And I also am pleased to approve that the newly organized corporation, known as "Bonita Evangelistic and Good Health Association of Seventh-day Adventists," shall have complete and total authority to disperse these funds for the promotion and establishment of health facilities, as stated above.⁴

The Bonita Springs church board minutes of October 11, 1983, plainly state:

There was further discussion regarding the Beal Fund and its purpose. Elder Veach stated plans are for a

clinic and retirement center with cottages, duplexes, etc. . . . Elder Veach stated there is work to be done with the conference, such as the forming of a corporation. Pastor Osborne stated he will support and work with Elder Veach on this project.⁵

In November 1985 the monies given to the Bonita Springs church from the Beal trust were removed from church-reported funds. The actual amount in the trust at the time of removal was \$53,958.14. According to the October 14, 1985, and November 26, 1985, church board minutes,⁶ no authorization was given for the removal of the funds in the trust. The fund, totaling \$39,500.00, was received by Prophecy Countdown on June 10, 1986.⁷

Questions remaining to be reasonably answered are: Who withdrew the funds? Why did eight months elapse from the time the money was withdrawn from the church accounts until it was entered into the Prophecy Countdown accounts? Why is there a \$14,458.14 difference between the amount withdrawn from the church and that accepted by Prophecy Countdown? Although a postdated signed authorization was obtained by Prophecy Countdown, the clear intent of the original trust was that the funds be used by the Bonita Springs church for "good health facilities" to be built on land in the Bonita Springs, Florida, area.

On March 9, 1987, in action 87-30, the Florida Conference executive committee voted to create the all-lay-member Investigation Committee for Prophecy Countdown. The Beal trust became one of the areas of concern the committee addressed.⁸ Osborne answered in reply to the committee's question:

We are totally without knowledge of funds having been donated to the Bonita Springs Seventh-day Adventist Church and thereafter diverted to Prophecy Countdown, Inc., or its programs.⁹

In early 1986 an audit was requested by John Osborne.¹⁰ That audit was carried out by John Gilbert, auditor of the Florida Conference. His letter to the members of the Prophecy Countdown board listed "inadequacies that make it impossible for me to express an opinion regarding the financial operations of Prophecy Countdown for the period ending December 31, 1985."¹¹ Prophecy Countdown has not yet passed an audit by the General Conference Auditing Service. Allegations by former employees of Prophecy Countdown would suggest that the inadequacies shown in the 1986 audit still exist.¹²

After Osborne left the organized ministry, he was perceived to be critical and antagonistic toward his former employer. In 1987 he moved his organization to the Danielson property in Lake County, northwest of Orlando. He seemed to be moving toward a more cooperative spirit with the leadership in the Florida Conference as well as a more supporting role in the church.

Even then Osborne was having problems with his staff. Several staff members moved to Prophecy Countdown from as far away as California and Washington only to be on staff for a short time before either resigning or being forced to resign. This list includes such names as Dane and Vicky Griffin, Frank and Elisa Cox, Mike and Chris Mattingly, Bob and Carol Aldrich, Phil and Joey Draper, Bill and Marge Bishop, and others.

In the summer of 1987 Osborne petitioned the Florida Conference to form a small church or company for his employees at Prophecy Countdown. The conference executive committee approved the request, and the Rolling Hills company was formed on July 26, 1987 (see Appendix XXX).

The company was not—in the usual manner—placed under the leadership of a conference-employed pastor in the area; John Osborne was officially designated by the conference as the lay leader of the company. When Prophecy Countdown moved its operation from the Danielson property to its current home, just a few miles from the Mount Dora Seventh-day Adventist Church on U.S. 441, the Rolling Hills company moved with the organization. While Prophecy Countdown was located on the Danielson property, it was housed in prefab housing at the cost of thousands of dollars per month. Money was tight. Funds were not flowing into Prophecy Countdown to match the outgo of the organization adequately.

Recently Prophecy Countdown borrowed \$46,000 in two notes from Bill and Marge Bishop (Bill was the associate pastor of the Rolling Hills company and on the payroll of Prophecy Countdown). The first note, dated August 8, 1988, was for \$16,000, a 90-day note, and the second, dated April 5, 1989, was for \$30,000, with a 30-day note. The purpose of these notes was to pay a large debt at Studio Six in Orlando for the production of the new Prophecy Countdown evangelistic television series. John Osborne/Prophecy Countdown defaulted on the loan. Not until two years later did the Bishops successfully reclaim their money. The Bishops firmly believe that they took every Christian step before beginning legal action to reclaim their funds. The debts were repaid by John Osborne/Prophecy Countdown following a judgment rendered by the court only after a threatened sheriff's sale of Prophecy Countdown assets in Lake County, Florida.¹³

Prophecy Countdown needed money. They began to test the waters to find a way to produce more income. When the first of the videos in the series *The Greatest Crisis in the History of Adventism* was released, a single large donation was received. The response was better than they had hoped. From that time onward the die was cast.

On June 24, 1990, the Florida Conference executive committee voted to remove Osborne from the position of lay leader of the company at Prophecy Countdown:

Due to recent public activity by John Osborne that we feel does not correctly represent the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists or its employees, VOTED to withdraw the appointment of John Osborne as lay leader of the Rolling Hills company.¹⁴

In a meeting on June 25, 1990, the day following the Florida Conference committee action removing Osborne from the leadership of the Rolling Hills company, a group of delegates from Prophecy Countdown and the Rolling Hills company—including Osborne—was informed of the action taken by the executive committee. The Rolling Hills company leadership met on the next Wednesday, June 27, 1990, to discuss the action. In a letter written on July 1, 1990, to supporters of Prophecy Countdown, Rolling Hills company associate pastor Dennis McKeever stated:

A motion was made and unanimously accepted to keep Pastor John Osborne in his position as lay leader of the Rolling Hills church and that a letter stating the same be sent to the Florida Conference executive committee.¹⁵

On Sabbath afternoon, June 30, 1990, at 1:30 p.m., the Rolling Hills company held a meeting and discussed the events of that week. All in attendance seemed to agree with the action of their leadership taken on June 27, 1990.

Elder Obed Graham, then secretary of the Florida Conference, wrote a letter to Dennis McKeever dated August 31, 1990 (see Appendix XXXV), in which he requested a meeting with certain leaders in the Rolling Hills company and Prophecy Countdown organization. Included were three lists of questions to be answered before the meeting. The Rolling Hills company replied as follows:

The Rolling Hills company constituency, not just the leaders of the company, voted to keep John Osborne as their pastor. . . . We do not accept the assumption that the final responsibility rests with the [executive] committee. The sheep have a right to have a say in the selection of their shepherd.¹⁶

Not until the position of the Rolling Hills company was very clear did the executive committee act in disbanding the company. On November 29, 1990, action 90-126 was voted:

The Florida Conference executive committee has reviewed the actions taken by the Rolling Hills company in refusing to acknowledge the removal of John Osborne as lay leader of the company and the written responses to questions addressed to the group. Based upon this information, this committee believes that additional action is warranted at this time. . . . We, therefore, believe that the continued approval of the Rolling Hills company is no longer appropriate or in the best interest of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

and it is therefore, with profound regret, VOTED THAT THE ROLLING HILLS COMPANY IS DISBANDED, EFFECTIVE AS OF November 29, 1990.

By voting to ignore the action and direction of the conference executive committee, the Rolling Hills company took the position that they were above and beyond the authority and control of the local conference. It had become a question of simple organizational integrity. The company had not originally selected Osborne as their lay leader. That decision came from the Florida Conference. It is not now, nor has it ever been, the policy of the Florida Conference to allow companies or churches to select their own pastors or lay leaders representing the conference. As lay leader, Osborne was acting on behalf of the Florida Conference in the Rolling Hills company. When his behavior became such as not befitting the position, the Florida Conference executive committee chose to terminate their support of him as the authorized lay leader.

It was not until almost a year later that conference leadership began to deal with Osborne's membership. Prophecy Countdown continued to become more strident and irresponsible in its presentations on "celebration" and other issues. No change in direction was witnessed. The administrative committee of the Florida Conference (responsible for the day-to-day operations of the conference) on September 16, 1991, voted to recommend to the executive committee that Osborne's name be brought to the committee for discussion and possible action.

In a letter signed by Obed Graham, conference president, and Lewis Hendershot, conference secretary, dated September 16, 1991, Osborne was informed of the possibility of discipline and was invited to attend the meeting:

This letter is to let you know that your name will be discussed on the conference committee September 29, 1991, for possible discipline. We have placed this item on the agenda based on the following ADCOM action: Voted to invite John Osborne to attend the September 29, 1991, conference committee, if he so desires, to show cause as to reasons he should not be disciplined on the basis of "persistent refusal to recognize properly constituted church authority or to submit to the order and discipline of the church."

John, it is with great regret that we feel the time has come to deal with this situation on our committee. Please be assured that our intention is to give you opportunity, if desired, to present your side of the above-stated cause of discipline.¹⁷

On September 20, 1991, Osborne faxed a document to Graham and Hendershot:

Subject: church membership. Let this serve as notice that we wish our names to be removed from the Florida Conference Church of Seventh-day Adventists

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY. [signed] John Wesley Osborne, Jr., Dianne I. Osborne, John Wesley Osborne III. Our names are up for first reading tomorrow in our new Seventh-day Adventist church home.¹⁸

On September 29, 1991, the Florida Conference executive committee met and voted the following action (91-98):

VOTED to DROP John Osborne from membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church for apostasy. It was noted that we received a facsimile from John, signed by John Osborne, Dianne Osborne, and Johnny Osborne, requesting that their names be dropped from the Florida Conference Church and stating that they were in the process of joining another Seventh-day Adventist church.

A transfer of church membership, which is what the Osbornes wished to complete, could not be done in the way requested if proper and recognized organizational procedure was to be followed. The stated reason for the action taken by the executive committee is found in the 1990 revision of the *Church Manual* in the list of reasons for dropping a member for apostasy—reason 8: “Persistent refusal to recognize properly constituted church authority or to submit to the order and discipline of the church.”¹⁹

Osborne, however, was able to find another small Adventist congregation, in Troy, Montana (where he had no physical presence), that was willing to accept him into membership on profession of faith. This was done in spite of the objections of the local conference (see Appendix XXXIX).

The Ethical Use of Source Materials

Is there a “right” and a “wrong” way to use information and material that is disseminated to the public? The obvious answer is yes. Honesty and integrity are requirements in the publication of materials. What are the “rules of the road” when it comes to the use of source materials? Does Prophecy Countdown consistently use its source materials ethically?

A longtime writer for the *New Yorker* magazine, John Hersey, explains:

The writer must not invent. The legend of the license must read: None of this was made up. The ethics of journalism, if we can be allowed such a boon, must be based on the simple truth that every journalist knows the difference between the distortion that comes from subtracting observed data and the distortion that comes from adding invented data.²⁰

If we believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is God’s medium of truth in the world today, then we must hold ourselves to an even higher code of ethics. To do less than to meet worldly standards indicates a lack of basic

Christian honesty and integrity. This is especially true in the use of sacred resources—the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. The science of hermeneutics is the study of arriving at the true meaning of the author’s statements. To abuse the hermeneutic of either the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy will open the door for a multitude of errors in theology and understanding. Thus it is important to see how Osborne has used—or abused—the material he has dealt with. Certain representative examples will be noted.

The Use of the Writings of Ellen G. White

The 20-plus hours of videos produced by Prophecy Countdown contain hours of quotations from the pen of Ellen G. White. Prophecy Countdown has the CD-ROM disk produced by the Ellen G. White Estate. Many hours go into searching for just the right quotation to support the speaker’s point of view. Two questions need to be answered: What is the correct use of the Spirit of Prophecy? How does Prophecy Countdown use the Spirit of Prophecy?

To answer the first question, consider a transcript of a lecture by Roger Coon of the Ellen G. White Estate as he teaches a class on the subject of hermeneutics at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University.

We’re going to talk this morning about hermeneutics, which you notice is on the board. I have defined it as the science and art of deriving meaning. Hermeneutics is interested in what the prophet says, but is even more interested in what the prophet means.

There are three rules of hermeneutics that were set forth a number of years ago by T. Housel Jemison. He wrote the undergraduate textbook for prophetic guidance courses in 1955. The book is entitled *A Prophet Among You*. Much that is in that book is out-of-date today due to no fault of the author. But much is very much up-to-date, including his chapter on hermeneutics.

In the chapter he suggests three rules of hermeneutics, or rules of interpretation, to try to derive the meaning of what the prophet meant by what the prophet said. Let me share them with you this morning.

First of all, take all that the prophet says before you draw up your bottom-line conclusion. One or two statements might actually lead you in a wrong direction. Let me give you an example. There are those that teach the idea that God does not kill sinners. They will quote a statement from *The Great Controversy* or from *Christ’s Object Lessons* that indicates that Ellen White is supporting that view. But if you take all that Ellen White had to say on that subject, I think that there is no way that you can come to that conclusion.

The second rule follows the first one: After you have gathered your materials, if one statement seems to be

out of kilter as far as the other statements are concerned, if there seems to be some discontinuity here, if there seems to be some discrepancy, then check the context of the statement in question.

Now, there are two kinds of context. There is internal context and there is external context. The internal context is what the prophet said just before or just after the statement that seems to be presenting something of a problem. The external context is the setting in which the prophet said it. That can be important. To whom did the prophet say it? Why did the prophet say it? What was the background of circumstances that called for this particular statement? As I have studied the writings of Ellen White in my work in the White Estate these past 10 years, I have been amazed at the number of times in which Ellen White bemoaned the fact that her writings were being taken out of context. The same is still happening today and even happening in instances in which some people claim to be very special friends of the White Estate and seem to want to put the umbrella of the White Estate over what they are doing. But, dear friends, check the context of each statement.

In Acts 17:11 Luke said that the Thessalonians were noble, but the Bereans were more noble for two reasons. First of all, they received the word with all readiness of heart. So they were willing to accept new light. Second, they weren't gullible—they searched the Scriptures daily, to see whether those things were so. Now, when you begin to realize the antecedent of that expression "those things," you cannot help marveling, because what he's talking about is what Paul was teaching these people in Berea and in Thessalonica.

Now, Paul had the two highest spiritual gifts by his own statement. In 1 Corinthians 12:28 he says that apostleship is the highest gift and the gift of prophecy is the second highest gift of the Holy Spirit. And Paul had both of them. I suppose that the Christians in Thessalonica simply said: "Well, if Paul has these gifts, what he says must be so." The people in Berea received his word with all readiness of spirit. They did not dismiss him out of hand, but they checked him out. And Luke, incredibly, says that the Bereans were more noble because they checked out what Paul had to say.

Ellen White is being quoted out of context today repeatedly by people who really ought to know better. I think if Paul and Luke were alive today, they would praise the people who would check it all out and say that they are more noble than the people who don't.

Now, the third rule of interpretation recognizes that every time a prophet is giving counsel—please notice the rather narrow parameter here—he or she is doing one of two things. The prophet is either enunciating a principle or, second, applying a principle in what we might call a policy statement. They are not the same thing, and we need to be able to distinguish between them.

Now first of all, what's a principle? I think most dictionaries would define *principle* as an unchanging, unvarying rule of human behavior. Principles never change. Principles of today were the principles of the days of Ellen White, principles of the days of Martin Luther, in the days of Jesus, in the days of Abraham, and in the days of Adam. Principles do not change.

But sometimes a prophet, instead of enunciating a principle, will apply a principle in what we might call a "policy statement." Now, policies do change as the circumstances that call them forth may change. Policies do change; principles never change. And when prophets are giving counsel, they are either enunciating a principle or applying one.

Now, if you decide what the prophet says is a policy, you haven't finished your homework until you dig down under the policy to find out on what principle it is based, because that principle will have a contemporary application, though it may be quite different than the one the prophet gave.

How did Ellen White herself apply each of these three rules of interpretation and how does Prophecy Countdown address them?

Principle 1: Study the teachings of all applicable counsel before drawing conclusions.

In discussing a pamphlet in which a church member called the church Babylon, Ellen White wrote:

I have been made very sad in reading the pamphlet that has been issued by Brother S. and by those associated with him in the work he has been doing. Without my consent, they have made selections from the *Testimonies*, and have inserted them in the pamphlet they have published, to make it appear that my writings sustain and approve the position they advocate. In doing this they have done that which is not justice or righteousness. Through taking unwarrantable liberties they have presented to the people a theory that is of a character to deceive and destroy. In times past many others have done this same thing, and have made it appear that the *Testimonies* sustained positions that were untenable and false.²¹

In the Prophecy Countdown videos the quotations selected often show support for only one side of an issue, whereas there are numerous quotations that would provide a counterbalance. The following four examples are typical of Prophecy Countdown's treatment of other topics:

1. Church organization, as shown in videos 5, 6, and 7 (for further information contact the North American Division).
2. The church in the end-time, as seen in videos 4, 6, and 7 (for further information contact the North American Division).
3. The events transpiring in the 1890s and early 1900s regarding the General Conference, as shown in videos 6

and 7 (for further information contact the North American Division).

4. Issues surrounding celebration churches, in videos 1, 2, and 3 (for further information contact the North American Division).

Principle 2: Consider the time, place, and circumstances in which the message was given. Ellen White pointed out the importance of context in these words:

God wants us all to have common sense, and He wants us to reason from common sense. Circumstances alter conditions. Circumstances change the relation of things.²²

Some examples of Prophecy Countdown's failure to apply this basic principle are as follows.

In the seventh video of the series *The Greatest Crisis in the History of Adventism* (for further information contact the North American Division), Osborne quotes *The Great Controversy*, page 64, to suggest a parallel between the Waldenses and Prophecy Countdown. He reads the paragraph this way: "The church in the wilderness," and not the proud hierarchy enthroned in the world's great capital, was the true church of Christ."

He then says: "Let me read that one more time and just change the word 'world' to 'nation.' "The church in the wilderness," and not the proud hierarchy enthroned in the [nation's] great capital, was the true church of Christ."

The context does not justify his change of the wording. By doing so, he forces a new and inaccurate meaning on the statement. In the context of this statement Ellen White did not equate the Seventh-day Adventist Church with the papal power enthroned in Rome.

In the same video Osborne quotes page 38 of *The Great Controversy*:

"The world is no more ready to credit the message for this time than were the Jews to receive the Saviour's warning concerning Jerusalem" [*The Great Controversy*, p. 38]. When God's messengers warned Jerusalem, were they warning the world or the church? Friend, the church! And the same thing is true today. So let's read that again on page 38, OK? "The world [the Seventh-day Adventist Church] is no more ready to credit the message for this time than were the Jews to receive the Saviour's warning concerning Jerusalem. Come when it may, the day of God will come unawares to the ungodly. When life [in the church] is going on its unvarying round; when men are absorbed in pleasure, in business, in traffic, in money-making; when religious leaders are magnifying the world's progress and enlightenment, and the people are lulled in a false security—then, as the midnight thief steals within the unguarded dwelling, so shall sudden destruction come upon the careless and ungodly, and they shall not escape."

Again, the context of this quotation from *The Great*

Controversy does not justify the addition in brackets of the words "the Seventh-day Adventist Church" and "in the church." The additional words bring the quotation into harmony with the speaker's presuppositions but yield a result that is totally out of harmony with Ellen White's teaching on the subject. Ellen White does not equate the Seventh-day Adventist Church with popery or papal power, and to suggest that she does so greatly undermines God's church.

Principle 3: Discover the principles involved in any specific counsel. Ellen White understood the relationship between principle and what Dr. Coon has referred to as "policy." In a letter written to Mrs. M.M.J. O'Kavanagh, a non-Adventist temperance activist in Australia, dated January 8, 1894, she said:

I am happy to assure you that as a denomination we are in the fullest sense total abstainers from the use of spirituous liquors, wine, beer, [fermented] cider, and also tobacco and all other narcotics. . . . All are vegetarians, many abstaining wholly from the use of flesh food, while others use it in only the most moderate degree.²³

This letter illustrates the practical outworking of the biblical principle found in 1 Corinthians 6:19: "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?" (NASB). The "policy" is declared in the letter, while the "principle" is stated in the biblical text. This biblical principle was affirmed by Ellen White in her writings on health reform and in her life.

In the sixth video of the series *The Greatest Crisis in the History of Adventism* (for further information contact the North American Division), Osborne quotes Ellen White to show her gradual withdrawal of support for the General Conference. He utilizes statements from a letter to Elder A. O. Tate, dated August 27, 1896:

It is not in the order of God that a few men should manage the great interests throughout the field. Many of the men who have acted as counselors in board and council meetings need to be weeded out. Other men should take their places, for their voice is not the voice of God. . . . These men are no more called "Israel" but "supplanters." They have worked themselves so long, instead of being worked by the Holy Spirit, that they know not what spirit impels them to action.²⁴

In the same video he quotes another Ellen White letter, written to Elder O. A. Olsen, from "Sunnyside," Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia, on May 31, 1896:

The same work that has been done in the past will be carried forward under the guise of the General Conference Association. The sacred character of this

association is fast disappearing. What will then be respected as pure, holy, and undefiled? Will there be any voice that God's people can regard as a voice they can respect? There certainly is nothing now that bears the divine credentials. . . . Who can now feel sure that they are safe in respecting the voice of the General Conference Association?

Much pride and loftiness, and a spirit which desires to rule, has been manifested: but very little of the spirit which leads men to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of Him has been shown. Human inventions and human plans are eclipsing sacred things, and excluding divine instruction. Men are taking the place of God by seeking to assume authority over their fellowmen.²⁵

These two quotations show that Ellen White definitely had a reason for making such strong statements about the church's leadership at that time. The principle she was addressing is that our leaders must be men of high moral and spiritual character. They must be led by the Holy Spirit as they lead the church. The men surrounding Elder O. A. Olsen at that time did not all meet these requirements. But these statements do not suggest the need for a different governance structure, as Osborne suggests.

A careful reading of the transcripts of the Osborne videos (for further information contact the North American Division) will reveal many instances in which he fails to follow the three rules of hermeneutics. Like others before him, Osborne has been able to attack the church by misusing the Spirit of Prophecy writings.

Milwaukie Videotaping

In the second video of the series *The Greatest Crisis in the History of Adventism* (for further information contact the North American Division), Osborne discusses a news item in the March 16, 1987, North Pacific Union Conference *Gleaner*. On page 19 are a photo, headline, and caption about the videotaping of the Milwaukie church service in Portland, Oregon. The headline and caption read:

Milwaukie Videotaping. Video cameras invaded the Milwaukie church in March to capture the spirit of worship that has become a hallmark of the 550-member congregation. The taping session was initiated by Reuben A. Hubbard of the Theological Seminary at Andrews University. According to Hubbard, Milwaukie's style of worship service will become part of a resource library for graduate students.

This is what Osborne has to say about this subject:

Now, friend, did you get that? There is only one Seventh-day Adventist theological seminary in the United States of America. There is only one place where our Seventh-day Adventist ministers are trained. It is almost mandatory that you go to the theological seminary at Andrews University, Berrien Springs,

Michigan, before you become a Seventh-day Adventist minister.

Our Seventh-day Adventist ministers pastoring our churches across the nation, graduates of Andrews University, have been trained [since 1987] in celebration! Adventist friend of mine, don't you let anybody bamboozle you into thinking that this celebration theology coming into our church is just some innocent "new program." As we found out in [the first video], it's not. Ministers coming out of our theological seminary have been exposed to, initiated in, and trained for "celebration."

Osborne's statement assumes that "celebration" services are bad by definition—certainly a debatable assumption. But even if his assumption is accepted for the sake of argument, the question remains: Does the seminary expose, initiate in, and train students for "celebration"?

First of all, it should be noted that Dr. Hubbard has not been connected with the seminary for a number of years, and it is likely that the controversial tape departed with him. Second, Osborne never checked with the seminary to discover just what it is teaching concerning worship. One of the current students, Robert Burns, had this to say when interviewed in the chapel of Seminary Hall:

There has been some discussion about the celebration movement in classes—very little discussion. But, no, there has been no training. There has been no emphasis placed upon that by our instructors. We're not urged to set up our churches as celebration churches when we leave the seminary here. Absolutely not!

So, has John Osborne accurately portrayed what is being taught at the seminary regarding celebration worship? No (see Appendix XL).

Opera Play at Southern College

In the third video of the series *The Greatest Crisis in the History of Adventism* (for further information contact the North American Division), Osborne reports on a play performed in Ackerman Hall at Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists, on March 18, 1990. It was an opera that was done as a class project by one of the music classes at the college. He says this about the opera:

This drama—or opera, as they call it—is the dramatization of Roman mythology, involving witches and their hapless victims. . . . The general premise of this play is centered around besotted drunks, sailors having quick affairs with women while on shore leave, women talking about death and suicide, men harassed by demons, witches brewing in dark caves, and human gods sending messages through spirits that humans must obey.

What Osborne fails to tell his viewers is that the col-

lege administration was as deeply disturbed about what had taken place as he was. In a widely distributed letter, dated May 7, 1990, Southern College president Don Sahly (see Appendix XL) stated:

As president of the college, I wish to apologize to our concerned parents, friends, and college constituency for the aspects of the program that gave concern.

In response to Prophecy Countdown's video, Dr. Sahly says:

I have seen the video where John Osborne is describing what took place on the campus of Southern College. My reaction is that it is a distorted view of what actually happened. . . . He billed it as a missionary outreach inviting many children to our campus. The play was never performed as a missionary outreach or as a missionary project. It was a class project by a small class in the Music Department, studying historical ideas and so on in music. . . .

I should have been more aware and alert and dug into it deeper than I did to find out exactly what all was going to transpire. . . . I wish the play had never taken place. It was a class project performed in the music building, not billed or advertised by Southern College as a major production, nor did we invite publicly all the community to attend, because it was held in the small auditorium in the music building—maximum seating capacity of 250 seats—and the auditorium was not filled. So it was not lots of numbers that attended, as projected by John Osborne.

He also brought out the concepts of missionary, which disturbed me. And he said that no wonder *missionary* is being dropped from the names of our colleges. And he used the term *recently*. I believe that Southern Missionary changed its name in 1981. This is now 1991. A whole decade has gone by since the change of name. The missionary spirit is, I believe, more alive than it ever was.

We have produced, this past year, a video ourselves on the missionary outreach of Southern College in the country of Honduras. I would be more than pleased to hold up many of our students as examples of missionaries that go out from this campus. In fact, right at this time, as we are here visiting, there are now more than 50 of our students out in the foreign fields of this church's denomination, holding forth in evangelistic crusades, English language schools, or as elementary and high school teachers. . . .

In the last two summers our Theology Department has held crusades in Ashville and in Tampa, in which more than 100 souls have been baptized. I believe that the missionary spirit is very much alive. . . . Never is there a Sabbath that goes by in which there are not missionary activities carried out by Southern College.²⁶

It is evident that Osborne has not accurately and fully

portrayed the events that transpired at Southern College and the reaction of the college administration. He has unfairly used one unfortunate incident to tarnish the whole program and attempt to ruin the reputation of a fine Christian college that has served the church so well over the years.

Spanish *Great Controversy* Deletions

In the video series *The New Age Adventism* (for further information contact the North American Division), Osborne correctly reports that some statements have been deleted in a Spanish version of *The Great Controversy*. A large segment of the video is taken up by reading the Spanish and English versions together, showing what has been deleted in the Spanish version. Commenting on these deletions, Osborne says:

I have known for some time now that there is a diabolical attempt to destroy *The Great Controversy* in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. . . . The new Spanish *Great Controversy* just printed by Pacific Press Publishing Association removed vital truth from the original text dealing with—can you guess?—the pope and the Roman Papacy as the antiChrist.

The facts are that some years ago an antidefamatory law, which prohibited publications that were anti-Catholic, was enacted in Argentina. The leaders of the church in that country requested the church's press to provide an abridged edition so that their literature evangelists could continue selling this important book. It was meant to be sold only in Argentina, and only until such time as the ban might be lifted.

Subsequently a printing of the abridged version was done in the Caribbean. Elder Tulio N. Peverini of the Pacific Press Publishing Association explained:

Without our authorization the printers of the modified edition included the Pacific Press name. . . . The original intention of this edition was to serve the church in Argentina because of some local problems, and not outside of this country. The printing outside Argentina was done without the official approval of the church.

Osborne contends that the church is responsible for watering down the message of the Spirit of Prophecy. It is important to note that the church was not responsible for the distribution outside of Argentina of the edition in question. Osborne takes an event that has a reasonable explanation and presents it as something sinister—a conspiracy. Either he has never verified his facts, or he is deliberately twisting the story to make points against the church.

It is also worthy of comment that even during Ellen White's lifetime changes were made to make the book more appropriate for its intended public audience. Shortly

after the 1911 edition was produced, work on the first foreign language edition of the book was undertaken. L. R. Conradi and H. Hartkop, living in Hamburg, Germany, headed up the project. Much correspondence took place between these two and William White, Ellen White's son and chief assistant. White wrote to Hartkop on January 2, 1913, as follows:

We wish that he [a chosen worker in Hartkop's office] shall give faithful consideration to the questions which have been raised in your field (a) regarding incorrect translations; (b) regarding titles and terms which might offend the authorities in the empire, or our critics of the Catholic Church; (c) any other matters deemed worthy of consideration by those having the interest of the book and the interest of our cause at heart.²⁷

A few days later, January 5, 1913, in a letter to Hartkop, White stated:

It may be that I did not state in my letter of January 2 that we would be pleased to have you arrange for the translation into German of all those passages where we have made changes in the latest English edition and propose to follow the same in the German edition.²⁸

In these two statements White lays down the principles involved in translations into foreign languages: 1. They should follow as closely as possible the latest authorized English edition. 2. The translation must be as correct as possible. 3. Material that might be offensive to some in the foreign language can be deleted. The Spanish edition discussed by Prophecy Countdown falls well within the accepted guidelines for editing English and foreign language editions. These guidelines were established during Ellen White's lifetime and have been used since.

Hypnotism and Mind Control

A clarion cry of Prophecy Countdown is the seemingly massive use of mind-control techniques in the church today. A list of some 200 pastors, administrators, and lay members has been published by Prophecy Countdown as their proof that mind control is practiced in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Ellen White wrote adamantly against what she termed mesmerism and hypnosis. While counseling a leading physician in a sanitarium, she said:

In dealing with the science of mind cure, you have been eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which God has forbidden you to touch. It is now high time for you to begin to look to Jesus, and by beholding His character become changed into the divine likeness. Cut away from yourselves everything that savors of hypnotism, the science by which satanic agencies work.²⁹

Good counsel for all Christians!

The church fully stands with Ellen White on this issue. What was the mesmerism and hypnotism that she opposed? A brief history shows there were very good reasons for her opposition to these two modalities.

Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815) was the earliest physician to use psychoanalytic practices.³⁰ He postulated

the existence of a fluid that filled the universe and was the means through which humans were connected to nature and to one another. According to his theory, the origin of disease could be traced to disturbances of this fluid in the body; health depended upon reestablishment of the proper balance of this fluid. The "magnetizer" (therapist) cured patients by utilizing his own fluid—his own "animal magnetism"—to correct their imbalances.³¹

Utilizing a procedure referred to as the "magnetic pass," with Mesmer in the role of magnetist, he and his patient sat face-to-face with knees locked to each other, the charismatic Mesmer casting a spell through sweeping movements across the patient's body. In successful cases, a "magnetic crisis" would ensue in which, after a hysterical seizure, the patient's symptoms would disappear.³²

Although Mesmer's theory was mistaken, mesmerism is considered the forerunner of modern hypnotism.³³ While much of mesmerism is now considered to be fallacious,

some of the procedures used by Mesmer for healing were in ways analogous to current hypnotic practices. Typically, the sessions included a variety of implicit suggestions given to patients in a setting that facilitated relaxation, a belief in the magnetizer's abilities, and expectations that dramatic events were to take place.³⁴

There is another aspect of Mesmer's work that has turned out to be a precursor of basic therapeutic insights. In addition to the commission's report, there was a secret report to the king of France, which explained that because many female patients developed strong erotic feelings toward the magnetizer, the technique constituted a serious threat to public morality. Clearly this report anticipated the concept of transference and its potential complications.³⁵

The next milestone in the evolution of hypnotic-like therapy procedures is marked by the work of the Scottish surgeon, James Braid, who coined the term *hypnosis* in the 1840s. . . . Braid shifted the metaphor from the mesmeric crisis to one of artificial sleep, during which a person can and does respond to suggestions.³⁶

Hippolyte-Marie Bernheim (1840-1919), a professor of internal medicine, wrote a text that highlighted the importance of suggestion and demonstrated that suggestions given during a hypnotic state could be carried out in a waking condition without the subject's knowledge. Bernheim

called his procedure psychotherapy.³⁷ Hippolyte-Marie Bernheim laid the groundwork for Freud to enter the scene and hence his resultant work in psychoanalysis.

Hypnosis granted the therapist a power similar to that of a chemist: it could *do* and *undo* paralyzes and amnesias, just as the chemist could compose and decompose substances. . . . Hypnotherapy, in Freud's hands, became both a scientific method for studying the relationship between trauma and pathological symptoms and an efficient curative technique.³⁸

Today hypnosis is defined as "a state of attentive, receptive concentration, with a relative suspension of peripheral awareness. This . . . is accompanied by an experience of dissociation."³⁹ There are three factors associated with hypnotism.

1. Absorption

Hypnotized individuals are intensely absorbed in their trance experience.⁴⁰

2. Dissociation

Many routine experiences that would ordinarily be conscious occur out of ordinary conscious awareness.⁴¹

3. Suggestibility

While hypnotized individuals are not deprived of their will, they have a tendency to accept uncritically instructions in trance, suspending the usual conscious editing function which raises the question "Why?" when an instruction is given. Thus, hypnotized individuals are more prone to accept instructions, no matter how irrational. They are also less prone to distinguish an instruction as coming from another rather than themselves and so will tend to act on another person's ideas as though they were their own.⁴²

Textbooks on psychiatry admit that hypnotism is not therapeutic: "There is nothing intrinsically therapeutic about hypnosis, and it is not in and of itself a therapy."⁴³ If there is no intrinsic therapeutic value, why use it?

The above history of mesmerism and hypnotism is the same understanding that was prevalent in Ellen White's day. She states:

The sciences of phrenology, psychology, and mesmerism are the channel through which he comes more directly to this generation and works with that power which is to characterize his efforts near the close of probation. . . . Satan has come unperceived through these sciences and has poisoned the minds of thousands and led them to infidelity. . . . It is a plan which

he himself has laid that he may gain access to minds and influence them as he pleases.⁴⁴

Ellen White is in complete agreement with the secret report sent to the king of France about the problems of morality and mesmerism. She says:

An agent of the great deceiver will say and do anything to gain his object. It matters little whether he calls himself a spiritualist, an "electric physician," or a "magnetic healer." By specious pretenses he wins the confidence of the unwary. . . . Disguising himself as an angel of light, while the blackness of the pit is in his heart, he manifests great interest in women who seek his counsel. . . . Pretending great interest in their welfare, he casts a spell over his unsuspecting victims, charming them as the serpent charms the trembling bird. Soon they are completely in his power; sin, disgrace, and ruin are the terrible sequel.⁴⁵

There can be no doubt what Ellen White was condemning when she wrote:

The world, which is supposed to be benefited so much by phrenology and animal magnetism, never was so corrupt as now. Through these sciences, virtue is destroyed, and the foundations of Spiritualism are laid.⁴⁶

She was condemning mesmerism, hypnotism, and the mind cure as she understood them to be. Mrs. White correctly wrote of the temporary nature of the mesmeric cure:

The mind cure is one of the most dangerous deceptions which can be practiced upon any individual. Temporary relief may be felt, but the mind of the one thus controlled is never again so strong and reliable. . . . It is not God's design for any human being to yield his mind to another human being.⁴⁷

The church does not believe in nor promote or encourage any Seventh-day Adventist member or employee to take part in any form of mesmerism or hypnotism, as defined above. Leaders of the church take seriously the following words:

Men and women are not to study the science of how to take captive the minds of those who associate with them. This is the science that Satan teaches. We are to resist everything of the kind. We are not to tamper with mesmerism and hypnotism—the science of the one who lost his first estate, and was cast out of the heavenly courts.⁴⁸

Osborne also charges that a large group of church leaders has been trained in neurolinguistic programming (NLP) and mass hypnotism and that the Seventh-day Adventist seminary at Andrews University teaches mesmerism and

mass hypnotism to its students. (See Appendix XL for the charges of hypnotism and mind control.)

Part of the problem arises from Osborne's definition of hypnotism. He quotes from a book by Bandler and Grinder:

We believe that *all* communication is hypnosis. That's the function of every conversation. . . . Whenever *any-one* communicates, they're [*sic*] trying to induce states in one another by using sound sequences called "words."⁴⁹

This definition broadens the scope of hypnotism to include any communication that happens between individuals—in other words, persuasion. Do leaders and ministers of the church seek to persuade people? Certainly. It is the task of the church to convince people to accept the salvation offered through Jesus and to live in a manner that will prepare them for His glorious second advent. The apostle Paul wrote: "We persuade men" (2 Cor. 5:11). But this is obviously far different from a hypnotism in which people are coerced to do things against their will. Adventists believe in complete religious freedom.

If one wishes to apply this new definition of hypnotism to the church, it must also apply to Prophecy Countdown. By a study of the Prophecy Countdown videotapes, it can be demonstrated that Osborne uses the very concepts he denounces. He seeks to sway the minds and emotions of his viewers.

What about the charge that hypnotism is being taught to ministers-in-training at the Theological Seminary at Andrews University? This results, first of all, from a confusion on the part of Osborne of two different programs and, second, from his failure to actually investigate what the seminary is teaching. He here demonstrates his tendency to pick up a rumor and repeat it without bothering to verify its accuracy.

No such courses at all are taught at the seminary, but in their last quarter some students attend the North American Division Evangelistic Institute (NADEI) near Chicago and receive credit toward their degree. Here they have taken the seminar known as Lab I. There is also a Lab II, the purpose of which is to train facilitators to conduct Lab I. (Lab II is taught only by John Savage and his wife.) Osborne charges that these two seminars train pastors in mass hypnotism and teach participants to use neurolinguistic programming (NLP). What are the facts?

The titles of the two labs are "Calling and Caring Ministries." The content of Lab I has two parts: a dropout track that explains the process by which members leave the church and a set of listening and observation skills taught in a workshop setting. The skills are listed below:

1. Behavior Description: Describing specific observable behaviors of another person.

2. Creative Questions: Asking questions based on the speaker's unfinished thoughts.

3. Direct Expression of Feeling: Identifying and naming one's own inner emotional state.

4. Fogging: Agreeing with the truth of the speaker's critical statement(s).

5. Life Commandments Listening: Listening for the hidden stories that determine some of a person's behaviors.

6. Sensory Dialect: Listening for and responding in the dominant mode of the speaker's language.⁵⁰

7. Paraphrase: Restating, in the listener's own words, the content of the speaker's verbal communication.

8. Perception Check: Checking out the listener's perception (guess) about what the speaker is experiencing (feeling/emotions) by responding to the messages that the person is sending.

9. Story Listening: Making a guess about the hidden struggle that is told through the stories the speaker shares with the listener.

10. Story Polarization Listening: Listening for the polarities (opposites in the speaker's stories) as a clue to his/her inner struggle.⁵¹

The above skills are learned in a lab setting, and then participants divide into teams of two. Each team then visits the home of an inactive member, learning valuable lessons on how to listen to and observe people. Just as physicians must be trained to observe carefully in order to diagnose illnesses, so pastors must be able to listen and observe. The skills that the pastor must use are the very same as the physician's, only employed in a different setting. Labs I and II are for gaining just such skills. Hypnotic thought plays no part in the content of the two labs.

Labs I and II are produced by LEAD Consultants, Inc., an organization operated by Dr. John Savage. This organization also produces a course called "Neurolinguistic Programming." By looking at LEAD Consultants' own schedules, one readily sees that these are two distinct programs, but Osborne has confused them. Labs I and II deal only with "calling and caring ministry." Neurolinguistic programming is not broken down into labs, but rather into levels 1, 2, 3, and 4. Both courses are independent of each other, and the subject matter is totally different.

In the first video of the series *The New Age Adventism* (for further information contact the North American Division), Osborne says:

Well, who is John Savage? . . . He is the one who is being used extensively by our conferences to teach NLP to Seventh-day Adventist pastors and to certify specified leaders as trainers in NLP.

Does Savage conduct neurolinguistic programming

seminars for Adventist ministers and lay members? No. Rather, he conducts labs entitled "Calling and Caring Ministry." Further, even where his organization does conduct NLP courses for other parties, Savage is not the instructor. In a letter dated March 10, 1992 (see Appendix XL), he states: "I do not do the training for NLP certification. This is done by another staff member." A look at the LEAD Consultants schedule confirms his statement.

In the same letter, Savage addresses Osborne's contention that he is teaching hypnosis to Adventist ministers and lay members:

I do not teach hypnosis nor any form of it. I am not trained to do so, so that even if I wanted to I could not. Mr. Osborne is completely confused about the difference between Lab I and Lab II graduates and NLP participants. Lab I does not teach, in any form or in any manner, any type of hypnosis. As you know, Lab I and Lab II teach in-depth listening skills. It does not teach mass hypnosis. . . .

"Calling and Caring Ministries," Lab I and Lab II, are distinctly different training events than the four weeks of training in neurolinguistics. Mr. Osborne has them totally confused. . . . Mr. Osborne's perceptions are extremely inaccurate and anyone who believes him is believing a lie. We are not connected in any way or form to the New Age movement nor do we teach any of its precepts.

In the first video of the series *The New Age Adventism* (for further information contact the North American Division), Osborne says: "These NLP training seminars have been officially adopted, endorsed, and promoted by the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists."

Does the NAD officially endorse and promote NLP as he states? Russell Burrill, director of the North American Division Evangelism Institute (see Appendix XL) in La Grange, Illinois, where NAD ministers receive evangelistic training, replied:

I wish to state unequivocally to you that the institute does not teach hypnosis in any way, shape, or form, nor does it use NLP training. In the past we have taught Lab I, which deals with reaching the inactive member. The seminar as we taught it had nothing to do with hypnosis whatsoever. In fact, we do not have currently, and have not in the last year and a half had, any person on our staff who is qualified to teach Lab I. In addition, we do not teach our students to start celebration churches as delineated by John Osborne's nine points of a celebration church. I would also hasten to say that John Osborne has never checked with us to discover whether or not we teach these things, and all such statements by him are gross misstatements and false.

Questioned on the topic, Gary Patterson, administrative assistant to the president of the North American

Division, referred to the February 20, 1992, *Adventist Review* editorial by William G. Johnsson:

Let's hear it straight: Has hypnotism been taught to Adventist pastors? I quote the NAD paper: "No! not in any training program known to the NAD staff. The denomination has taken a position against hypnotism, and if any workers were teaching it, they would be disciplined."

A final word—mine. Last time ("To Tell the Truth," Feb. 6) we suggested that honest speech demands that we do not pretend that things are better than they are, nor do we exaggerate problems in the church. I would add: Beware of any person or group that has a vested interest in disparaging the church and its ministry.

Seminary student Robert Burns, who has taken Labs I and II, was asked, "In your opinion, as a student of both labs, have you been trained in neurolinguistic programming and hypnotism?" His response:

No. Neurolinguistic programming was briefly mentioned in Lab II. We were not taught to use neurolinguistic programming. In fact, it was made clear that if we were interested in that, we would have to go on and take an additional seminar specifically in that area. I was not interested in that. I have no idea how to hypnotize anybody. I don't want to hypnotize anybody. It would be impossible for me to do it even if I wanted to because, as I say, I don't know how.

In the first of the video series *The New Age Adventism* (for further information contact the North American Division), Osborne discusses a book entitled *Becoming a Master Student*. The book is authored by David B. Ellis and published by College Survival, Inc., of Rapid City, South Dakota. Osborne makes this statement:

It is a handbook that blatantly teaches everything we've talked about so far in this video: mind control, hypnosis, and New Age thinking. But listen to this, Adventist friends: it is taught as a required course at the following Seventh-day Adventist colleges: Pacific Union, Loma Linda, La Sierra, Southern, and Atlantic Union. And it is also taught at Andrews University.

Do these colleges indeed use this book in a required course? Each college was consulted. Only Andrews University has ever used it in a required course—and that course is no longer required. While some of the other colleges have used the book, it has not been used in a required course. So the book's impact and usage is a small fraction of what Osborne implies.

Gwen Ashley, administrative assistant to the president of Atlantic Union College (see Appendix XL), states:

It has come to our attention that Atlantic Union College's bookstore supposedly stocks a book entitled

How to Become a Master Student [*Becoming a Master Student*] and that supposedly we are teaching a course using this text. Please be advised that we do not now nor have ever stocked the aforementioned book, nor are we now or have we ever taught a course using this text. Thank you for bringing this letter of clarification to the attention of any appropriate party.

Pacific Union College used the book for a year or two and then, after a review of the book, withdrew it from use. It currently does not even sell the book in the college bookstore. Officials from La Sierra University said they never had heard of the book and do not teach any class, nor have they ever taught a class, using this text.

Myrna L. Schlenker, executive assistant to President Lyn Behrens of Loma Linda University (see Appendix XL), said:

Thank you for calling about what you have heard regarding the required use of *Becoming a Master Student* in classes at Loma Linda University. As I indicated to you, after consulting with various schools of the university and with our bookstore, I have learned that this book is *not* sold by our bookstore and is *not* required reading for any classes at Loma Linda University. Unfortunately, it appears that you have been given misinformation. We do appreciate you taking the time to call us for the correct information.

Cyril Roe, who teaches Southern College's class on how to become a good student, said:

This class is not required of all freshmen. In fact, there are this current semester 22 students enrolled in two sections—two small sections out of a total of some 360 freshmen. The way in which students get into the class is if they have tremendous needs as reflected by either their ACT or by their overall GPA from academy.

Asked to describe the texts and the usage of those texts in his class, Dr. Roe said:

Yes, we have three official texts. First of all the Bible, then the book *Education*, by Ellen White; and third, *Becoming a Master Student*. We use these texts this way:

Becoming a Master Student is used as kind of a framework around which we build the material. But we are constantly going to the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy to pull out relative statements and relative ideas, and specifically when we need to implant Christian values and a Christian value system, we appeal to the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. . . .

We are currently using the sixth edition, which is the current edition. Last year we used the fifth edition, which, incidentally, is the one he [Osborne] is talking about on the video—his point about the triangles and

the person in the lotus position. In the text, in the fifth edition, if he read carefully in the introduction, he would read that was purely a symbol used to encourage kids to think. At this point we want you to think. And it had nothing to do with the New Age or anything like that.

In fact, when I heard about this, I went to some of the students of last year and said, "Do you remember us talking about New Age or about hypnotism in the class?" They laughed and said: "We don't even know what you are talking about." They were totally ignorant of this thing. But I have had people telling me that the triangle is a New Age symbol, and that every text that has it in, even a math text, should be taken off our campus. . . .

Now, the fact that a book mentions hypnotism—the fact that a book mentions New Age, this, that, or the other kind of theory—does not mean that they are teaching that, or that they specifically want us to teach it.

There are some other things to remember. In a college class we do not go through a textbook line by line, page by page, section by section, paragraph by paragraph, like we would in an elementary school. We take ideas; we discuss those ideas. In our classes in our schools we discuss them from an Adventist point of view, and we look at them from an Adventist point of view. And the students come out of the course reinforced in the solid beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists. . . . We are making an honest attempt at Southern College to help kids that otherwise may not succeed and wouldn't have a Christian education at college level. . . . I am appalled that anybody would listen to this and really believe it.

So, has John Osborne accurately portrayed our colleges' use of the book *Becoming a Master Student*? No.

Conclusion

Just a few examples have been presented of how John Osborne has taken rumors or isolated incidents and distorted them in attempt to discredit church leaders and institutions. Other examples can be found in his videos (for further information contact the North American Division).

The examples of inaccuracy that have been cited clearly portray an unfortunate pattern. It is not known why Osborne so consistently provides incorrect or incomplete information. However, his track record should cause all who want to base their opinions on fact to be extremely cautious in accepting at face value what he has to say.

When such a preponderance of a person's public presentations can be shown to be inaccurate and incomplete, it cannot be suggested that these are simply one-time mistakes made in the rush to meet production deadlines. Viewers, listeners, and readers deserve accurate, complete, and unbiased information. Even when Osborne correctly

reports part of an issue, he rarely does the required research to present the issue in its true context.

"But so what if he gets some of his facts wrong?" some might say. "He's speaking to issues that need to be aired." In part, this statement is true. John Osborne has touched on a number of important issues. And it's precisely because these issues are so important that it is even more crucial that they be discussed in a thorough, unbiased manner, with all the relevant facts provided.

Unfortunately, much of what Osborne has to say has the potential to destroy the influence and careers of those individuals against whom he makes allegations. Moreover, his allegations do much to discredit the church and its leaders. More important still, his assertions have the potential to cause those whose faith is wavering to give up altogether.

The counsel of Jesus in Matthew 18 will lead Christians to go in a spirit of love and concern to those they believe to be in error and to set the matter before them with the goal of winning them and recovering them. It is contrary to this spirit to gather up supposed faults and publish them abroad as Osborne has been doing.

In the light of Osborne's destructive attacks, church leadership saw no other course but to remove him from his pastoral position and finally from church membership. Loyal Adventists will not believe his accusations against their church, but will check into the facts for themselves and will give the church the benefit of the doubt.⁵²

REFERENCES

- ¹ See Appendix XX for the letter John Osborne wrote stating his intent to leave the ministry and for a copy of the letter written by J. P. Rogers, then treasurer of the Florida Conference, giving the date of termination.
- ² See Appendix XXI, "Answers to Statements Submitted on April 2, 1987, by the Laymen's Committee Entitled 'Areas of Concern.'" These answers were written by an unknown person(s) within the Prophecy Countdown organization.
- ³ See Appendix XXII, "Carl Chapin Irrevocable Trust."
- ⁴ See Appendix XXIII, "To Whom It May Concern—August 18, 1985."
- ⁵ See Appendix XXIV, "Beal Fund."
- ⁶ See Appendix XXV, "Bonita Springs Seventh-day Adventist Church Board Minutes."
- ⁷ See Appendix XXI, "Laymen's Committee," p. 2.
- ⁸ This committee was set up by the Florida Conference Executive Committee to study problematic areas of interest within the Prophecy Countdown organization.
- ⁹ See Appendix XXI, "Laymen's Committee," p. 2.
- ¹⁰ See Appendix XXVI, letter to John Osborne from John Gilbert, auditor, Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Jan. 27, 1986.
- ¹¹ See Appendix XXVII, auditor's statement sent to members of the Prophecy Countdown board, Feb. 14, 1986.
- ¹² See Appendix XXVIII, confidential memorandum written by Jack Wright dated Sept. 6, 1991 (released Sept. 13, 1991); Appendix XXIX, letter to the supporters of Prophecy Countdown dated December 1991.
- ¹³ See Appendix XXXI. It was not without ample time and effort that the suit was brought to bear on Prophecy Countdown/John Osborne. The Bishops endeavored to use the Florida Conference to mediate the sit-

uation. When all efforts to gain satisfaction of the legal debt failed, the suit was filed. John Osborne/Prophecy Countdown lost the suit and was then forced to repay the Bishops the monies lent plus interest.

¹⁴ See Appendix XXXII, Florida Conference executive committee action 90-55; Appendix XXVIII, confidential memorandum written by Jack Wright dated Sept. 6, 1991 (released Sept. 13, 1991); Appendix XXIX, letter to the supporters of Prophecy Countdown dated December 1991; Appendix XXXIII, letter to Jack Wright from Dennis McKeever, p. 6, par. 3.

¹⁵ See Appendix XXXIV, letter to Prophecy Countdown supporters from Dennis McKeever.

¹⁶ See Appendix XXXVI, "Reply to Questions from Florida Conference Committee."

¹⁷ See Appendix XXXVII, letter to John Osborne from Elders Obed Graham and Lewis Hendershot, dated Sept. 16, 1991.

¹⁸ See Appendix XXXVIII, fax from John Osborne and Dianne Osborne to Elders Obed Graham and Lewis Hendershot.

¹⁹ General Conference of SDAs, *Seventh-day Adventist Manual* (1990), p. 160.

²⁰ Melvin Mencher, *News Reporting and Writing*, fifth ed. (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1991), p. 618.

²¹ White, *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 32, 33.

²² ———, *Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 217.

²³ A copy of this letter is kept in the E. G. White Estate, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904-6600.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Taken from the transcript of a videotaped interview with Don Sahly.

²⁷ A copy of this letter is kept in the E. G. White Estate.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ E. G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 350.

³⁰ Harold I. Kaplan, M.D., and Benjamin J. Sadock, M.D., eds., *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry/V*, fifth ed. (Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins, 1989), vol. 2, p. 1442.

³¹ Howard H. Goldman, M.D., M.P.H., Ph.D., ed., *Review of General Psychiatry*, second ed. (Norwalk, Conn.: Appleton and Lange, 1988), p. 12.

³² Kaplan and Sadock.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 1503.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1504.

³⁷ Goldman, p. 13.

³⁸ Leon Chertok, M.D. and Isabelle Stengers, Ph.D., *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 176, No. 11 (November 1988): 646.

³⁹ John A. Talbott, M.D., Robert E. Hales, M.D., and Stuart C. Yudofsky, M.D., eds., *Textbook of Psychiatry* (Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Press, 1988), p. 908.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 909.

⁴⁴ E. G. White, *Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 290, 291.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 198.

⁴⁶ ———, *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 352.

⁴⁷ ———, *Medical Ministry* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1932), p. 116.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 110, 111.

⁴⁹ Richard Bandler and John Grinder, *Frogs Into Princes: Neuro Linguistic Programming* (Moab, Utah: Real People Press, 1979), p. 100.

⁵⁰ Nothing is found in the neurolinguistics of the Lab II manual suggesting a link to hypnotism or any other mind-control science. It is simply employed as another tool of listening and observation skill. If a participant of Lab II does not wish to use neurolinguistics, it is not forced upon him/her. It is plainly stated in Lab II that if anyone wishes to become trained in NLP, he/she must attend another seminar with another leader.

⁵¹ Joyce Savage, "Learning the Language of Healing," *Leader's Guide for a Laboratory School on Skills for Calling and Caring Ministries* (Reynoldsburg, Ohio: LEAD Consultants, Inc.), Vol. III, pp. 15, 16.

⁵² See Chapter 5 for a discussion on the sacredness and importance of God's church.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORIC ADVENTISM—

ANCIENT LANDMARKS AND THE PRESENT TRUTH

As a body of believers claiming to be God's people on earth, Adventists must know with certainty the enduring truths that God has called them to preach and preserve. But the very task of fulfilling the gospel commission also requires the church to change, to adapt its message to a world of diverse individuals and cultures. Thus, until the Lord returns, the church is called to live in an uncomfortable tension between the enduring and the adaptable, between that which never changes and that which must. In familiar Adventist terms, it is the tension between "landmarks" and "present truth."

The contemporary discussion has been brought into sharp focus by increasingly strident critics who claim to be the true protectors of "historic Adventism" over against what they consider to be an apostate mainstream Adventist Church. But if, as will be argued here, their definition of "historic Adventism" is seriously flawed, conscientious Adventists cannot accept their claim to be the inheritors and protectors of the faith.

For purposes of analysis, Adventist history is divided here into three periods:

The Formative Years: Adventism from the Disappointment until the organization of the General Conference in 1863.

The Organized Church Interacting With the Prophet: Adventism during the active ministry of Ellen White, 1863-1915.

The Organized Church After the Death of the Prophet: Adventism after the death of Ellen White, 1915-1992.

Within each period, four key aspects of church life will be considered. A brief overall synopsis of each is given here and expanded with supporting detail in the sections that follow. Specific application to the contemporary critics of the church will be made in conclusion.

CONTENT of the faith: Adventist teachings. In the formative period of Adventism, the "landmarks" of the faith were few and straightforward. Although later years would witness controversies sparked by voices arguing for more structure and specificity, still it was a simple covenant that bound Adventists together, when the first local conference organized (Michigan, 1861): "We, the undersigned, hereby associate ourselves together, as a church, taking the name of Seventh-day Adventists,

covenanting to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ."¹

The enduring aspects of the faith, suggested by the term *landmark*, were balanced by a phrase suggesting newness and adaptability, *present truth*. Yet present truth was seldom perceived as entirely new light, but rather as a shift in emphasis or focus that enhanced rather than detracted from the landmarks.

STRUCTURE: church organization and procedures. The organized church has not always matched the simplicity of its landmark beliefs with correspondingly simple organizational structures. Not surprisingly, organizational difficulties often have gone hand-in-hand with uncertainty over the landmarks.

Yet at those very points in the church's history when it has suffered some of its most significant organizational and structural difficulties (assuming the correctness of Ellen White's criticism), the evangelistic and mission work of the church has enjoyed remarkable prosperity. Furthermore, by committing themselves to prayer and personal renewal, Adventist leaders have discovered healing for the church's organizational woes and renewal for the church at large.

SPIRIT: the ethos and atmosphere in which the church conducts its work. As seen in the explicit counsel of Ellen White and as reflected in Adventist history, a spirit of criticism has a withering effect on the life of the church. But when God's Spirit controls the spirit of the church, the result is seen to "flow forth in words that will reform, but not exasperate."² When the Spirit controls the spirit, the church will not only present the gospel with clarity and simplicity, but also develop those efficient structures and sensitive procedures that serve to build confidence in the church.

DISSENT: criticism and the parting of the ways. Diversity of opinion has always been part of Adventism. But in the absence of the Spirit of Christ, that which could be an enriching diversity turns to damaging dissent. In extreme cases, if dissenters do not leave of their own accord, the church has had to take action to separate them from the larger body of believers.

Even before formally organizing as a denomination in 1863, Adventists found it necessary to disfellowship dissident members and to remove preaching credentials. While

doctrinal points generally were involved, often a harsh, critical spirit toward the other members of the group was the determining factor. By seeking to impose their own private convictions on the church rather than contributing to a church consensus, dissidents made it impossible for the church to function as the body of Christ. The body could be restored to health only by removing the offending member.

The Formative Years: 1844-1863

Content of the Faith: Adventist Teachings

In the wake of the Disappointment, the little remnant who eventually would found the Seventh-day Adventist Church continued their search for truth. As they studied and prayed for guidance, certain "landmark" truths emerged as central to their experience.

But whatever else these devout believers might claim to believe about God, they were quite clear from the first that the Word of God would be their guide. As early as 1847, in *A Word to the Little Flock*, James White wrote: "The Bible is a perfect and complete revelation. It is our only rule of faith and practice."³

That position was affirmed in *Present Truth*, forerunner of the *Adventist Review* and "the earliest SDA periodical":⁴ "The Bible is our chart—our guide. It is our only rule of faith and practice, to which we would closely adhere."⁵

In 1853, in response to an inquiry from a Seventh Day Baptist, James White, speaking as editor of the *Review and Herald*, formulated a simple but inclusive description of Adventist beliefs revolving around the elements named in Revelation 14:12, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus:

As a people we are brought together from divisions of the Advent body [the Millerites], and from the various denominations, holding different views on some subjects; yet thank Heaven, the Sabbath is a mighty platform on which we can all stand united. And while standing here, with the aid of no other creed than the Word of God, and bound together by the bonds of love—love for the truth, love for each other, and love for a perishing world—"which is stronger than death," all party feelings are lost. We are united in these great subjects: Christ's immediate, personal second Advent, and the observance of all of the commandments of God, and the faith of His Son Jesus Christ, as necessary to a readiness for His Advent.⁶

Then as now, Sabbath and Advent, supported by the Bible as the only rule of faith, were the points that held Adventism together. During those formative years, however, Adventists were not oblivious to the greater complexity of their own faith or of Christian doctrine in general. Yet even some points of faith that always seem to have

been held with unanimity typically were not mentioned when Adventists summarized what it meant to be an Adventist.

The Sabbath Conferences of 1848-1849, for example, generally are credited as having forged a clear understanding of the Adventist "landmarks." Richard Schwarz summarizes eight specific points that won "general agreement" among the Sabbatarian Adventists as a result of the conferences:

(1) the imminent, personal, premillennial second advent; (2) the twofold ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, whose cleansing had begun in 1844; (3) the seventh-day Sabbath; (4) God's special supernatural enlightenment through Ellen White; (5) the duty to proclaim all three angels' messages; (6) conditional immortality and death as a dreamless sleep; (7) the timing of the seven last plagues; and (8) the final, complete extinction of the wicked after the millennium. Many details and ramifications of these doctrines remained to be elaborated, but the basic concepts had been worked out by the end of 1848.⁷

In 1889, however, when the issue of landmarks was being agitated by those who wanted a longer list, Ellen White described the experience of those formative years and summarized the landmarks even more concisely. The very point she was trying to get across was how *short* the list of landmarks actually was:

The passing of the time in 1844 was a period of great events, opening to our astonished eyes the cleansing of the sanctuary transpiring in heaven, and having decided relation to God's people upon the earth, [also] the first and second angels' messages and the third, unfurling the banner on which was inscribed, "The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." One of the landmarks under this message was the temple of God, seen by His truth-loving people in heaven, and the ark containing the law of God. The light of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment flashed its strong rays in the pathway of the transgressors of God's law. The non-immortality of the wicked is an old landmark. I can call to mind nothing more that can come under the head of the old landmarks.⁸

But perhaps the most telling point in favor of the simplicity of early "historic Adventism" is the covenant cited at the beginning of this article. When it became clear that local Adventist congregations wished to maintain closer and more formal ties with each other, steps were taken to organize a local conference. In 1862 the churches in Michigan, organizing as the first such conference, put forth the following simple covenant: "We, the undersigned, hereby associate ourselves together, as a church, taking the name of Seventh-day Adventists, covenanting to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ."⁹ In short, the unadorned words of Revelation 14:12 described

the essential content of the early Adventist teachings.

Structure: Church Organization and Procedures

Formal organization did not come easily for Adventists. Many of the believers had been wounded by “organized” religious bodies during the years prior to the Great Disappointment. They were not eager to put structures into place that could open old wounds. The more radical sentiments expressed by George Storrs some months before the Disappointment (February 1844) still echoed in Adventism: “Take care that you do not seek to manufacture another church. No church can be organized by man’s invention but what it becomes Babylon the moment it is organized.”¹⁰

In the early 1850s, however, James White began to argue more forcefully for organization under the banner of “gospel order.” In December 1853, in the first of four editorials in the *Review and Herald*, he suggested that those opposed to gospel order were actually “a more perfect Babylon.” “To suppose that the church of Christ is free from restraint and discipline,” he wrote, “is the wildest fanaticism.”¹¹

White’s second article addressed the delicate topic of how gospel order relates to unity of belief. Typically churches resort to creeds to ensure unity. But creeds fail miserably in that respect, White argued. “Why not discard them, and at once cast these things which do not answer the end for which they are made to the moles and to the bats?”¹² But would that leave the church without a rule of faith? “We answer, that she is provided with a creed that is sufficient. ‘All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.’”¹³ In short, White was in favor of organization, but not if that led to a creed defining the content of faith more precisely than given in Scripture.

The first formal step toward organization was the issuing of a kind of basic credential to identify those recognized by the group as reliable ministers. Dated card certificates were issued, signed by two leading ministers, usually James White and Joseph Bates.¹⁴

As the work expanded, more needs surfaced that pushed the church toward some kind of organization. First, ministers needed financial support. Then it became clear that property belonging to the group (a printing press, for example) should be owned by the group. But a group cannot hold title to property unless it has a name. That turned out to be the decisive issue. Reluctantly, the believers decided to select a name for themselves. The one they chose was Seventh-day Adventist.

The steps leading up to the organization of the General Conference in 1863 were long and arduous. But the proponents of gospel order finally carried the day. Adventists now had a formal church structure to help them fulfill their mission to the world.

Spirit: The Ethos and Atmosphere in Which the Church Conducts Its Work

While James White was arguing for gospel order in the *Review and Herald*, others seemed to be cherishing their freedom in Christ more than he. In April of 1854, for example, just four months after White’s editorials on gospel order, a piece praising the rule of love appeared in the *Review*. It carried the title “The Advent Principle” and, curiously, was attributed to “Selected”:

What is the principle that unites the Advent Children in the sweetest union, without the formal constraint of organization? Is it not the power of a living faith, a faith that works by love, and the true and only principle of Christian fellowship? . . . The Adventists would have no constraint but that of love, and no faith but that which receives every word that God hath spoken.¹⁵

Although the church was discovering that “natural” processes were not adequate for solving the problems they faced, they still cherished the hope that a Christlike spirit would be present in their midst. They were not disappointed. Even as they developed the various aspects of organization in the face of strong and often opposing convictions, they still sensed an encouraging spirit of cooperation. The sentiment is captured nicely by an 1860 letter from James White to Uriah Smith, written shortly after the believers had voted for legal incorporation of a publishing house:

Our conference was one of wearisome labor, yet let God be praised that a good degree of harmony prevailed, and that the dear servants of the Lord parted with increased confidence in and love for each other. We look back with the greatest pleasure to the doings of our conference. The action upon securing church property legally is all that we have ever suggested, and more than we ever expected would be so unanimously adopted. This takes a great burden from our mind, and inspires courage to labor on in the cause.¹⁶

In the formative years the main body of believers could express strong and opposing convictions on a variety of topics, but still work together in love for the accomplishment of the church’s mission.

Dissent: Criticism and the Parting of the Ways

Although early Adventists consistently described the essential nature of their faith in terms of fidelity to Scripture and a commitment to the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, they were quite capable of disagreeing with each other on a variety of topics. Among the more notable ones were: 1. *Organization*. Prior to 1863 the various aspects involved with organization were debated with intensity. 2. *Shut door*. Following the disappointment of October 22, 1844, the believers did not find it easy to agree on the meaning of that crucial phrase in the para-

ble of the ten virgins, "and the door was shut." 3. *Time for beginning the Sabbath.* In the 1850s the time for beginning the Sabbath was problematic. Many, including Ellen White, temporarily held the position that the Sabbath began and ended at 6:00 p.m.¹⁷ 4. *Health principles and practices.* While Joseph Bates was long known as a disciplined health reformer, the actual practice of health reform in the church varied widely. Even a common ideal was not clearly established for many years.

It is in connection with health reform that a testimony from Ellen White suggests a principle with broader implications for the life of the church, namely, that members are perfectly free to hold diverse views in private but should be cautious about imposing them inappropriately on the church as a whole. In 1858 she wrote to a husband and wife who were convinced that the church should take a stand against pork:

I saw that your views concerning swine's flesh would prove no injury if you have them to yourselves; but in your judgment and opinion you have made this question a test, and your actions have plainly shown your faith in this matter. If God requires His people to abstain from swine's flesh, He will convict them on the matter. He is just as willing to show His honest children their duty, as to show their duty to individuals upon whom He has not laid the burden of His work. If it is the duty of the church to abstain from swine's flesh, God will discover it to more than two or three. He will teach His church their duty.¹⁸

James White's footnote to this counsel, appearing in the second edition of the *Testimonies*, is revealing:

This remarkable testimony was written October 21, 1858, nearly five years before the great vision of 1863, in which the light upon health reform was given. When the right time came, the subject was given in a manner to move all our people. How wonderful are the wisdom and goodness of God! It might be as wrong to crowd the milk, salt, and sugar question now, as the pork question in 1858.¹⁹

Both of the above quotations imply that some believers were eager to see the church adopt a more rigorous stance than the body at large had been prepared to do. In this instance Ellen White urged the agitators not to impose their views on the church. In some other cases, however, the insistent ones were not willing to listen to counsel and pressed their convictions until they and the church came to a parting of the ways. Even as early as 1853 local groups of Adventists did not hesitate to use the term *church* and enter into *church* discipline.

One such instance is reported in the *Review* of December 13, 1853. J. H. Waggoner had sent in a notice attesting to action taken by the church at Alden, McHenry County, Illinois. The church had voted to "withdraw fel-

lowship" from a Brother William A. Raymond for "his injudicious and unchristian course." His problem seems to have been behavioral rather than doctrinal. But in any case, the local body finally felt that it must take action.²⁰

Discipline of another kind was deemed necessary when divisive traveling ministers were perceived as a threat to the Advent believers. In 1854 representatives from several groups of Adventists came together and agreed to revoke the preaching privileges of H. S. Case, apparently a troublemaker for some time in the church at Jackson, Michigan. The *Review* of April 18, 1854, carried a brief notice, apologizing also for the delay in publishing an action which had been voted on February 17. The official report was prefaced with a brief editorial comment:

He has been a cause of great trial to the brethren for years, and a source of reproach to the cause of truth and the entreaties of his brethren who have patiently and kindly labored with him have been unheeded.²¹

Apparently some of the believers were not entirely pleased with the action against Case. The *Review* of April 25, 1854, contains a report on another conference at Jackson (March 31 to April 2) at which members from Sylvan Centre, Bald Eagle Lake, and Henrietta were also in attendance. At the conference the leaders explained that discipline had been necessary because the ones involved (apparently Case's companion, C. P. Russell, was now included) had been propagating "wrong teaching, thereby causing discord." Second, they were culpable for "utterly refusing to meet with them to examine and settle said difficulties."

After the explanation, "it was unanimously admitted that their decision was correct, and according to the Bible rule. The meeting closed with solemn and earnest appeals for perfect harmony and union with all who keep God's holy law."²²

A couple months later the *Review* editors felt the need to further defend the action against Case and Russell. Responding to an attack in the *Advent Harbinger*, the editors revealed some sensitivity to the issue of gospel order:

That some of the brethren in Michigan have moved rather fast in some cases in their zeal to establish church order is evident, but not with Case and Russell. Their injudicious movements and fanaticism was [*sic*] a cause of reproach, and although the brethren mourn that they could not reform them, yet they thank God that the cause is free from their baneful influence.²³

In sum it is clear from the published sources that differences of opinion, dissent, and criticism were all part of early Adventist history. Believers could differ even on matters of significance and continue to be members of the community in good and regular standing. At the same

time, however, relatively minor matters could grow into causes of church discipline if the person continued to oppose the larger church family and refused to listen to counsel. When that happened, an individual congregation or a group of congregations acting together followed what they considered biblical guidelines and voted to discipline members who refused to be subject to the will of the body.

The Organized Church Interacting With the Prophet: 1863-1915

With the formal organization of the General Conference in 1863, Adventism entered a new and complex era, especially as it relates to the issue of authority. With a newly minted church structure now in place, how would the authority of the church relate to the authority of Scripture and the authority of Ellen White? Would Scripture continue to be first and foremost?

During the Sabbath Conferences of 1848-1849, the believers had only to balance the authority of Scripture with that of God's young messenger, Ellen White. The advent of a formal church structure, however, added not just one but two additional kinds of authority: statements from church leaders and positions voted by the church in session. In a sense, the tensions generated by these potentially competing authorities would climax in two crises, one over the *content* of the Adventist faith at the General Conference session of 1888, the other over the *structure* of the church at the General Conference session of 1901. But Ellen White's perspective suggests that the underlying issue in both cases was not so much doctrine or structure, but the *spirit* in which the church addressed the issues. And if the spirit is wrong, then the church will not know how to handle *dissent*.

To give a sense of the movement of Adventist history toward the twin crises of 1888 and 1901, key events will be discussed in chronological order. Primary implications of the era for the four aspects of church life considered here (content, structure, spirit, dissent) will then be summarized.

The (Unofficial) 1872 Statement of Beliefs (see Appendix XLI).

In 1872 Adventists published an anonymous, nonbinding statement of beliefs. In the introduction, the unnamed author (Uriah Smith) took great pains to emphasize the unofficial and noncreedal nature of the document:

In presenting to the public this synopsis of our faith, we wish to have it distinctly understood that we have no articles of faith, creed, or discipline aside from the Bible. We do not put forth this as having any authority with our people, nor is it designed to secure uniformity among them, as a system of faith, but is a brief statement of what is and has been, with great unanimity, held by them. We often find it necessary to meet

inquiries on this subject, and sometimes to correct false statements circulated against us, and to remove erroneous impressions which have obtained with those who have not had an opportunity to become acquainted with our faith and practice. Our only object is to meet this necessity.²⁴

The nonbinding, noncreedal status of the statement is of special interest. Even more significant, however, is the fact that the statement is distinctly non-Trinitarian. Jesus is described as Creator and Redeemer but is nowhere identified as God or as eternal. He simply is "the Son of the Eternal Father."

For those who would wish to define "historic Adventism" in terms of specific doctrinal content, the 1872 date presents a real dilemma. To accept what Adventists considered binding at that time would exclude any reference to the nature of Christ or to a particular type of obedience. If one wishes, however, to claim additional content from that era and make that content binding in our day (even though Adventists from that earlier era refused to be bound by additional content), the question is: Would one be willing to accept *all* the content from that earlier era? Are the modern defenders of so-called historic Adventism really prepared to return to a non-Trinitarian position?

Significantly, perhaps, the statement does not explicitly affirm the full Arian teaching that Christ was a created being, even though several leading Adventists of the time openly confessed an Arian stance. According to the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, James White and Uriah Smith were "the two leading anti-Trinitarians," though Joseph Bates, J. H. Waggoner, E. J. Waggoner, and W. W. Prescott were also so inclined. The *SDA Encyclopedia* attributes Adventism's gradual adoption of Trinitarianism to the influence of Ellen White's writings, especially key statements found in *The Desire of Ages* (1898).²⁵

G. I. Butler's "Leadership" Tract (1873-1877)

In the 1870s a series of events occurred that showed how easy it would be for the church to grant excessive power and authority to human beings. In 1873 the General Conference voted to endorse a tract by G. I. Butler entitled "Leadership." It declared the leadership of James and Ellen White to be "incontestable" in the church; and in matters of church polity, all in the church were to give Elder White's "judgment the preference." Both Whites objected. Butler retracted his position, published "A Confession" in the *Review*, and presented a resolution at the next General Conference session, asking that the General Conference endorsement of the tract be reversed.²⁶ Later events, however, would suggest that Butler had not undergone a fundamental change in thinking. He simply was still responding obediently to authority. His view of authority would play a

troublesome role in and around 1888.

Finally, however, at the General Conference session of 1877, the church itself rescinded its endorsement of the leadership tract, voting a resolution that clearly established the General Conference as a *group*, not the General Conference president as an *individual*, as having authority over the church.²⁷ The same resolution sought to recognize the authority of Scripture and the rights of the individual conscience in relationship to actions voted by the body as a whole:

Resolved, that the highest authority under God among Seventh-day Adventists is found in the will of the body of that people, as expressed in the decisions of the General Conference when acting within its proper jurisdiction; and that such decisions should be submitted to by all without exception, *unless they can be shown to conflict with the Word of God and the rights of individual conscience.*²⁸

During this period Ellen White also sought to establish a proper role for the authority of the General Conference. In 1875 she penned the well-known testimony describing the General Conference as the *highest authority God has upon earth.*²⁹ *If removed from its context, the statement could be used simply to reinforce a concentration of authority at the General Conference level. The original point of the testimony, however, was to underscore the very principle that was to be voted in 1877, namely, the broadening of authority to a representative group rather than concentrating it on an individual, namely, the General Conference president, James White, as the recipient of the testimony had been inclined to do.*

But the tendency to concentrate authority lingered on. At the General Conference session of 1878, the very next year following the resolution of the "leadership" debate, Ellen White intervened in General Conference business in the interests of diffusing authority rather than allowing it to concentrate at the leadership level. Delegates had voted that the three leaders of the church's major enterprises be the members of the General Conference Committee: James White (publishing), J. H. Kellogg (medical), and Sidney Brownsberger (education). After an Ellen White vision, Kellogg and Brownsberger resigned and were replaced by S. N. Haskell and D. M. Canright, men who were in closer touch with the people in the field.³⁰

Rejection of a Church Manual in 1883

The church's handling of a proposed church manual in 1882-1883 may reflect a certain reaction to the events of the previous decade. In any event, the proceedings shed interesting light on the tension in Adventism between the primacy of Scripture and the authority of the church.

The General Conference of 1882 had appointed a committee to prepare a church manual, suggesting that it first

be published serially for discussion and criticism. As a result, 18 articles appeared in the *Review and Herald* from June 5 to October 9, 1883. The 1883 conference voted against adoption, however, recognizing the cogency of the following report from the very committee appointed to prepare the manual:

It is the unanimous judgment of the committee, that it would not be advisable to have a church manual. We consider it unnecessary because we have already surmounted the greatest difficulties connected with church organization without one; and perfect harmony exists among us on this subject. It would seem to many like a step toward formation of a creed, or a discipline, other than the Bible, something we have always been opposed to as a denomination. If we had one, we fear many, especially those commencing to preach, would study it to obtain guidance in religious matters, rather than to seek for it in the Bible, and from the leadings of the Spirit of God, which would tend to their hinderance in genuine religious experience and in knowledge of the mind of the Spirit. It was in taking similar steps that other bodies of Christians first began to lose their simplicity and became formal and spiritually lifeless. Why should we imitate them? The committee feels, in short, that *our tendency should be in the direction of simplicity and close conformity to the Bible, rather than in elaborately defining every point in church management and church ordinances.*³¹

The emphasis on the sufficiency of Scripture and simplicity of structure is consistent with the dominant trend in Adventist thought and practice up to that point. A lurking tendency toward overspecification, however, supported by the authority of the church, would soon surface with a vengeance.

The 1888 General Conference Session: Prelude and Aftermath

The 1888 General Conference session has been debated, dissected, and analyzed by virtually every special-interest group in Adventism. Some of the more significant "mainstream" interpretations of the experience include LeRoy Froom's *Movement of Destiny*, A. V. Olson's *Thirteen Crisis Years*, and more recently, George Knight's *From 1888 to Apostasy: The Case of A. T. Jones.*³² Typically and not unexpectedly, however, the protagonists in the various Adventist debates over 1888 tend to ignore Ellen White material cited by those of the "wrong" theological persuasion. For that reason the four-volume publication by the White Estate entitled *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*³³ is invaluable. Given the tendency of Adventists to appeal to Ellen White for support of *their* (private) interpretation of 1888, the set facilitates the process of checking at least the full literary context of Ellen White quotations from the 1888 era.

For purposes of the discussion here, Ellen White's

comments on the proceedings and the role of leading participants are particularly significant, especially as they relate to her attempts to preserve the essential elements of Adventism through the turmoil that surrounded the conference. How did she see the essence of Adventism when a General Conference in session seemed to depart from the will of the Lord?

For some time prior to 1888 Ellen White was expressing increasing concern to elected leaders over their tendency to “rule” the church. Especially revealing in that connection is an 1885 letter from Ellen White in Europe to G. I. Butler and S. N. Haskell. Butler was serving as General Conference president again. And according to the *SDA Encyclopedia* Haskell was serving simultaneously as president of three local conferences at the time the letter was written: New England, California, and Maine.³⁴ The letter suggests that Butler’s practice of authority mirrored the theory he had expressed earlier in his leadership tract. Published in *Testimonies to Ministers*, the letter is a stinging indictment of authoritarian practices. According to Ellen White, Butler and Haskell had assumed the right not only to rule but to think for their subordinates. The following quotations are some of the more striking ones:

Give men a chance to exercise their individual judgment. Men who follow the leading of another, and are willing that another should think for them, are unfit to be entrusted with responsibility. Our leading men are remiss in this matter. God has not given to special ones all the brain power there is in the world. . . .

I think I have laid out this matter many times before you, but I see no change in your actions. We want every responsible man to drop responsibilities upon others. Set others at work that will require them to plan, and to use judgment. . . .

There are men who today might be men of breadth of thought, might be wise men, men to be depended upon, who are not such, because they have been educated to follow another man’s plan. . . .

If anyone exercised his own judgment, and differed with you, you have disconnected from him as one that could not be trusted. Take your hands off the work, and do not hold it fast in your grasp. You are not the only man whom God will use. Give the Lord room to use the talents He has entrusted to men, in order that the cause may grow. Give the Lord a chance to use men’s minds. We are losing much by our narrow ideas and plans. . . .

How my heart aches to see presidents of conferences taking the burden of selecting those whom they think they can mold to work with them in the field. They take those who will not differ with them, but will act like mere machines. No president has any right to do this. . . . Those who desire to control the work think that none can do it perfectly but themselves, and the

cause bears the marks of their defects.³⁵

Meanwhile, as Butler and others maintained tight reins over the work in general, two young ministers out west in California were flexing their muscles. A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner, editors of *Signs of the Times*, were mounting a fresh presentation of righteousness by faith. As part of the discussion, the question of the law in Galatians had been brought to the forefront, an issue that put them in direct conflict with Butler and with Uriah Smith, editor of the *Review and Herald*. Both sides had gone into print on the issue.

Ellen White’s letters, both to Jones and Waggoner and to Butler and Smith, reveal she was deeply troubled that the divisive discussion had been taken public. But her correspondence is even more significant for the light it sheds on her understanding of the essence of Adventism. A letter to Jones and Waggoner from February 18, 1887, is excerpted here. Significant elements are italicized:

There are the *main pillars of our faith, subjects which are of vital interest, the Sabbath, the keeping of the commandments of God*. Speculative ideas should not be agitated, for there are peculiar minds that love to get some point that others do not accept, and argue and attract everything to that one point, urging that point, magnifying that point, when it is really a matter which is not of vital importance, and will be understood differently. Twice I have been shown that everything of a character to cause our brethren to be diverted from the very points now essential for this time should be kept in the background.³⁶

We are one in faith in the fundamental truths of God’s Word. And one object must be kept in view constantly, that is harmony and cooperation must be maintained without compromising one principle of truth. And while constantly digging for the truth as for hidden treasure, be careful how you open new and conflicting opinions. *We have a worldwide message. The commands of God and the testimonies of Jesus Christ are the burden of our work. To have unity and love for one another is the great work now to be carried on.* There is danger of our ministers dwelling too much on doctrines, preaching altogether too many discourses on argumentative subjects when their own soul needs practical godliness.

There has been a door thrown open for variance and strife and contention and differences which none of you can see but God. His eye traces the beginning to the end. And the magnitude of mischief God alone knows. The bitterness, the wrath, the resentment, the jealousies, the heart burdens provoked by controversies of both sides of the question causes the loss of many souls.³⁷

Truths connected with the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven will be talked of, written upon, more than now. There is to be closed every door that

will lead to points of difference and debate among brethren. *If the old man was purged from every heart, then there would be greater safety in discussion*, but now the people need something of a different character. There is altogether too little of the love of Christ in the hearts of those who claim to believe the truth. *While all their hopes are centered in Jesus Christ, while His Spirit pervades the soul, then there will be unity, although every idea may not be exactly the same on all points.*³⁸

A letter to Smith and Butler, dated April 5, 1887, some six weeks after the one to Jones and Waggoner, was equally sobering. While she deplored the fact that the discussion had gone public, now that the agitation had erupted she saw no other course than free and open discussion. That was the burden of her letter to these men in authority. Excerpts from her letter are given here, with key points italicized:

I want to see no pharisaism among us. The matter now has been brought so fully before the people by yourself as well as Dr. Waggoner, that *it must be met fairly and squarely in open discussion*. I see no other way, and if this cannot be done without a spirit of pharisaism, then let us stop publishing these matters and learn more fully lessons in the school of Christ.

I believe now that nothing can be done but open discussion. You circulated your pamphlet; now it is only fair that Dr. Waggoner should have just as fair a chance as you have had. I think the whole thing is not in God's order. *But, brethren, we must have no unfairness*. We must work as Christians. If we have any point that is not fully, clearly defined, and [that] can bear the test of criticism, don't be afraid or too proud to yield it.³⁹

While she firmly rebuked both sides in the debate prior to the conference, at the session itself Ellen White clearly supported the thrust of the message presented by Jones and Waggoner. Jones was too confrontive. But Waggoner's manner impressed her. In her remarks to the delegates on November 1, she noted that Waggoner had spoken in a "plain, straightforward manner, as a Christian should." Those who thought he was in error should "in a calm, rational, Christlike manner seek to show him from the Word of God where he is out of harmony with its teachings."⁴⁰

From the standpoint of what is needed to bring unity to the church, however, probably the most significant insight from that same address is Ellen White's straightforward admission that she did not consider some of Waggoner's interpretations of Scripture to be "correct." Yet "the fact that he honestly holds some views of Scripture differing from yours or mine," she said, did not make him a "dangerous man." Furthermore, as she exclaimed just a few sentences later, Waggoner's message "harmonizes perfectly with the light which God has been pleased to give me dur-

ing all the years of my experience."⁴¹

And what was that message? In her words, it was "the righteousness of Christ in connection with the law." That same paragraph clarifies what she elsewhere refers to as "present truth," the new and greater light that God gives His people. This is how she explained the relationship of the new and old:

I see the beauty of truth in the presentation of the righteousness of Christ in relation to the law as the doctor has placed it before us. You say, many of you, it is light and truth. Yet you have not presented it in this light heretofore. Is it not possible that through earnest, prayerful searching of the Scriptures he has seen still greater light on some points?⁴²

In an earlier presentation (October 21) Ellen White had spoken of the need for "present truth." "That which God gives His servants to speak today," she said, "would not perhaps have been present truth 20 years ago, but it is God's message for this time."⁴³ The footnote in *Thirteen Crisis Years* indicates that the statement was a response to a telegram from G. I. Butler, the "absent and ailing" General Conference president—a telegram urging the delegates to "stand by the landmarks."

Reflecting on the conference some weeks later, Ellen White wrote that Waggoner's message had not been "new light, but it was old light placed where it should be in the third angel's message."⁴⁴ Still, for her to adopt the position that she could disagree with Waggoner on the interpretation of Scripture yet at the same time be blessed by his presentation of "the righteousness of Christ in connection with the law" ran counter to Butler's perspective. In January of 1888 Butler had sent out "A Circular Letter to All State Conference Committees and Our Brethren in the Ministry." In it he claimed that Adventists had "never taken a stand upon Bible exegesis which they have been compelled to surrender."⁴⁵ Ellen White was arguing for much greater flexibility than that.

How could she do so? Because exegesis was only a means to a higher goal: the service of love. That higher goal must always be in sight. Different people would hold different perspectives on *how* to reach it. But all could still focus on the goal if they were willing to allow for different perspectives on lesser matters. For Ellen White, even the interpretation of individual passages of Scripture would rank among those "lesser" matters.

The identity of the 10 horns in Daniel 7 and the interpretation of the law in Galatians are the two vivid examples from 1888 that illustrate how the church could be distracted by lesser matters. In the interpretation of Daniel 7, A. T. Jones had proposed that the Alemanni replace the Huns. Uriah Smith insisted on standing by the "landmarks," the Huns. General Conference delegates actually

began calling each other Huns or Alemanni, depending on their preferred interpretation.⁴⁶

Although Adventists historically had allowed much room for differences of opinion, in the heat of battle the inclination was to insist that *one* view had to be correct and all others false, even on so minor a matter as the tenth horn in Daniel 7.

The law in Galatians might seem like a weightier matter. Yet Ellen White still put it among the “lesser” ones. Note how she responded to the claim that the whole future of the church depended on the right view of Galatians:

The remark was made, “If our views of Galatians are not correct, then we have not the third angel’s message, and our position goes by the board; there is nothing to our faith.” I said, “Brethren, here is the very thing I have been telling you. This statement is not true. It is an extravagant, exaggerated statement. If it is made in the discussion of this question I shall feel it my duty to set this matter before all that are assembled, and whether they hear or forbear, tell them the statement is incorrect. The question at issue is not a vital question and should not be treated as such.”⁴⁷

In that same document Ellen White describes how the *spirit* of the discussion began to shape her views of the interpretation of Scripture. “For the first time,” she said, “I began to think it might be we did not hold correct views after all upon the law in Galatians, for the truth required no such spirit to sustain it.”⁴⁸

In 1892, some four years later, Ellen White stated her position even more clearly, arguing that “the unity of the church” could not consist “in viewing every text of Scripture in the very same light.” The church could pass “resolution upon resolution to put down all disagreement of opinions.” But that would only “conceal the discord.” Instead, the church must focus on Jesus’ two great commands as the touchstone for all that it does:

The great truths of the Word of God are so clearly stated that none need make a mistake in understanding them. When as individual members of the church, you love God supremely and your neighbor as yourself, there will be no need of labored efforts to be in unity, for there will be oneness in Christ as a natural result.⁴⁹

If some in the church were finding the way murkier, for Ellen White the important things were standing out more clearly. In *The Desire of Ages* (1898), the chapter entitled “‘The Least of These My Brethren’” is an interpretation of the judgment parable in Matthew 25. What kinds of questions will the Lord ask of His people? Huns or Alemanni? No. Law in Galatians? No. Judgment turns on just “one point”: what we “have done or have neglected to do for Him in the person of the poor and the suffering.”⁵⁰ “Those whom Christ commends in the judgment

may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles.” Even the “heathen” who have “cherished the spirit of kindness” are included in His kingdom.⁵¹ Surely the delegates at the General Conference ought to do as well.

The 1901 General Conference Session: Prelude and Aftermath

The 1888 conference had been an agonizing experience for Ellen White. In December of 1888, in a letter to W. M. Healey, a less-than-helpful participant at the conference, she wrote, “My testimony was ignored, and never in my life experience was I treated as at the conference.”⁵²

From Ellen White’s perspective the General Conference sessions of the next decade did not improve much. They passed plans that Ellen White opposed (e.g., publishing work) and failed to implement those she considered meritorious (e.g., union conferences).⁵³

Yet the picture was not all gloom. The 1890s were years of tremendous expansion for the SDA educational system. Between 1890 and 1900 the number of church schools jumped from 13 to 245.⁵⁴ Expansion was also the keynote for SDA foreign missions. In spite of the intransigence of the church leaders, the work was going forward outside of Battle Creek. Fields further removed from church headquarters (South Africa and Australia, for example) were even brave enough to attempt innovations in church structure, over the objections of the leaders in Battle Creek. Unions and a revised departmental structure were both “new” ideas tried abroad that ended up serving the good of the larger church.

The turmoil of the 1890s climaxed in the General Conference session of 1901. Two years earlier, at the General Conference session of 1899, A. T. Jones apparently had access to a letter from Ellen White indicating that for several years she had not considered a General Conference session to be the “voice of God.” According to Richard Schwarz, Jones relished the role of reproofing prophet, actually calling on church leaders by name to repent of their actions and attitudes.⁵⁵

Ellen White had counsel for Jones. Everything you say and write may be “all true,” she wrote. But “one drop of gall” can turn it all to “poison.” When the “holy oil” from the “two olive branches” is emptied into the heart, it will “flow forth in words that will reform but not exasperate.”⁵⁶

The events connected with the 1901 General Conference session, however, suggest that Jones’s call for repentance was not far from the mark. But whatever he said or however he said it had not brought reform. When President George Irwin opened the floor for business at the 1901 session, Ellen White herself stepped forward to address the delegates. Before she was through, the indict-

ment was clear, but also the solution. Excerpts from her opening address are given below, with striking statements italicized:

I feel a special interest in the movements and decisions that shall be made at this conference regarding *things that should have been done years ago, and especially 10 years ago*, when we were assembled in conference, and the Spirit and power of God came into our meeting, testifying that God was ready to work for this people if they would come into working order. The brethren assented to the light God had given. . . . But *no special change was made* to bring about such a condition of things that the power of God could be revealed among His people. . . .

At the last conference which I attended here, there was gossiping and controversy in every house. If the people had prayed instead of gossiping, if they had talked with God, the condition of things would have been very different. . . .

All who are educated in the office of publication should see there exemplified the principles of heaven. *I would rather lay a child of mine in his grave than have him go there to see these principles mangled and perverted. . . . You have no right to manage, unless you manage in God's order. . . .*

O, my very soul is drawn out in these things! Men who have not learned to submit themselves to the control and discipline of God are not competent to train the youth, to deal with human minds. It is just as much an impossibility for them to do this work as it would be for them to make a world. *That these men should stand in a sacred place, to be as the voice of God to the people, as we once believed the General Conference to be—that is past.* What we want now is a reorganization. We want to begin at the foundation, and to build upon a different principle. . . .

There must be a renovation, a reorganization; a power and strength must be brought into the committees that are necessary. *Let every one of you go home, not to chat, chat, chat, but to pray. Go home and pray. Talk with God. Go home and plead with God to mold and fashion you after the divine similitude.*⁵⁷

The response was dramatic. A prayer session followed. Then committees went to work. The structural changes were significant, but not so significant as the change in spirit. At the conclusion of the conference, an editorial in the *General Conference Bulletin* described the session as "the very best . . . ever convened by Seventh-day Adventists." As the editorial noted, the result was all the more remarkable, for "hardly a delegate appeared at this session who did not anticipate worry, and even disaster more or less serious."⁵⁸

Ellen White, too, was ecstatic. Earlier she actually had told the delegates why she had not wanted to come to

Battle Creek: "I was afraid the burdens I would have to bear would cost my life."⁵⁹ Afterward she said:

During the General Conference the Lord wrought mightily for His people. Every time I think of that meeting, a sweet solemnity comes over me, and sends a glow of gratitude to my soul. We have seen the stately steppings of the Lord our Redeemer. We praise His holy name; for He has brought deliverance to His people.⁶⁰

When Ellen White said the General Conference was no longer the "voice of God to the people," that was not her last word on the matter. Shortly after the 1901 conference she wrote to a brother who was still being critical of the church:

Your course would have been the course to be pursued if no change had been made in the General Conference. *But a change has been made*, and many more changes will be made and great developments will be seen. No issues are to be forced. . . . It hurts me to think that you are using words which I wrote prior to the conference. Since the conference great changes have been made.⁶¹

In 1909 Ellen White carefully defined the role of the General Conference, seeking to avoid the two extremes, radical independence on the one hand or total reliance on those entrusted with the management of the church on the other:

At times, when a small group of men entrusted with the general management of the work have, in the name of the General Conference, sought to carry out unwise plans and to restrict God's work, I have said that I could no longer regard the voice of the General Conference, represented by these few men, as the voice of God. But this is not saying that the decisions of a General Conference composed of an assembly of duly appointed, representative men from all parts of the field should not be respected. God has ordained that the representatives of His church from all parts of the earth, when assembled in a General Conference, shall have authority.⁶²

In a few short years Ellen White would pass to her rest. Her written word would remain to guide the church. No longer would the live voice of the Lord's messenger be there to encourage, admonish, and rebuke. But before the modern era is considered, the primary implications of this era (1863-1915) must be summarized in terms of the four aspects of church life that are the focus of this study.

Content of the Faith

Adventism continued to hold to the priority of Scripture as its only rule of faith. Officially the church was reluctant to define the content of faith beyond the simple covenant that had been the basis for the first organized

churches. The 1872 statement of beliefs was nonbinding, and a proposed church manual was rejected in 1883.

The fact that the first statement of belief (albeit unofficial) was non-Trinitarian is remarkable. Also noteworthy are the debates over the law in Galatians and the Huns and Alemanni. In both cases, the attempts of strong-minded church officers to insist that their particular positions were normative for the church gave the impression that, in their view, at least, all Adventist beliefs were indeed fixed and structured.

Throughout the discussions, however, Ellen White persistently and consistently stressed the simple landmarks that had always characterized Adventism: Advent, Sabbath, and Ten Commandments. Fidelity to the two great commands of Jesus also began to appear in her writings as the touchstone for all Christian teaching and practice.

Structure: Church Organization and Procedures

The events of this era demonstrated that the early Adventist suspicions about the dangers of organization were not entirely unjustified. Authoritarian leaders tended to concentrate power at the highest levels of organization. The result was lack of flexibility in the work of the church and the loss of creative thinking. That same authoritarian tendency threatened to distort the content of the faith and to embitter the spirit.

In the view of Ellen White, however, even though the actions of the General Conference were not always correct, she still continued to work in good faith with those in leadership positions.

Spirit: The Ethos and Atmosphere in Which the Church Conducts Its Work

During this era it was the voice and pen of Ellen White that preserved the emphasis on the Christlike spirit as *the* significant factor in all aspects of church life. Without that spirit, it was not safe to discuss either the content of the faith or church structure. In the face of concerted attempts to specify additional content and add structure, Ellen White stressed the fact that the spirit was most important. At the 1901 General Conference session she made it clear that prayer for and with each other would be the only way that the right spirit could be restored.

Dissent: Criticism and the Parting of the Ways

Because of the dominating presence of Ellen White, dissent is very much a part of the scene between 1863 and 1915. She was critical of church leaders who attempted to cut off creativity and initiative, holding all the reins of power in their own hands.

Diversity is helpful when a Christlike spirit prevails. Discussion is possible and should be nurtured. But when

the spirit is wrong, dissent, especially in public, is destructive to the life of the church.

Although not noted in the historical survey above, several of the church's strong-minded leaders ultimately separated from the church because the church as a whole could not see it their way. Canright, Kellogg, and Jones all parted company with the Adventist Church. G. I. Butler, however, in spite of the remarkable number of testimonies and rebukes that he received from Ellen White, remained faithful to the end.

Authoritarian minds, when in positions of responsibility in the church, are likely to distort the church's ability to find unity in diversity. Overspecificity in the content of faith and a rigid church structure reduce the possibility for healthy dissent and for creative innovation. A spirit of Christlike kindness can scarcely survive where all are *required* to think and act along prescribed lines. This era in Adventist history shows how the authoritarian style lays the foundation for division and apostasy.

The Organized Church After the Death of the Prophet: 1915-1992

In the survey of the modern era some important events and trends will be identified but not discussed as fully as they were in the formative years or during the period when Ellen White worked with the organized Adventist Church. The task of critically evaluating the contemporary scene is in some ways rendered more complicated by the absence of the living voice of a prophetic messenger. Is it possible to render, without prophetic credentials, an incisive critique of people and affairs? Ellen White herself noted, "God has not given my brethren the work that He has given me."⁶³ The highly critical spokespersons for the so-called independent ministries have perhaps attempted to fill that "prophetic" role without a prophetic calling.

Several historical factors and significant events have contributed to the current situation in the church. Those will be briefly noted here. The primary implications will be discussed in a summary that addresses rather more directly the critics who have occasioned this study.

The Fundamentalist Movement

Although the *SDA Encyclopedia* seeks to distance Adventists from a Fundamentalist (see Appendix XLII) understanding of Scripture, there is evidence to suggest that mainstream Adventism openly identified with Fundamentalism in the 1920s. F. M. Wilcox, for example, editor of the *Review and Herald* from 1911 to 1944, declared that Adventists "should count themselves the chief of Fundamentalists today."⁶⁴

The extent to which Adventists have identified with Fundamentalism could determine the degree to which the contemporary church would reflect the tendency seen in

Butler, Smith, and others, to insist that every point of faith, no matter how small, must remain fixed and in place.

F. D. Nichol, *Review* editor from 1945 to 1966, well known for his apologetic defense of Adventism, may have contributed to a Fundamentalist-type perspective in the church. After the 1952 Bible Conference, for example, Nichol wrote in the *Review* of the "impressive fact that we have not changed our theology."⁶⁵ To be sure, the qualifiers that Nichol adds to that statement tend to temper its intensity. He seems to be speaking of Adventism's major doctrines. But even then it would seem that the shift to a Trinitarian theology is a significant "change" in Adventist thinking. Living in the shadow of Fundamentalism, however, the spokespersons for the church were not ready to call attention to change.

Ironically, in Gary Land's *Adventism in America* the very next page after the one citing Nichol's statement is headed "Dialogues With Evangelicals," an event that seemed to introduce into Adventism what many have considered inappropriate "change." For many of the church's more strident critics, that event plays a key role.

Church Manual

In 1932 the first official *Church Manual* appeared. At the 1946 General Conference session delegates voted that changes could be made in the *Manual* only at a full General Conference in session. While no doubt intended as a safeguard, the 1946 action could be seen as granting the *Manual* the kind of authority attributed to church creeds.

Statements of Beliefs

In 1931 the first official Adventist statement of Adventist beliefs appeared (see Appendix XLIII). Prepared by a committee of four at the request of the General Conference Committee, it appeared in the *SDA Yearbook* of 1931, then in the first official *Church Manual* in 1932. While the intent may have been largely "descriptive" in the same sense as the 1872 statement (see Appendix XLI), the 1931 statement did not include any qualifying preamble that would remind the church of its descriptive status. The earlier statement said Adventists "have no articles of faith, creed, or discipline aside from the Bible." The 1931 statement said that "Holy Scriptures . . . are the only unerring rule of faith and practice." Nothing is said about a creed.

The appearance of the statement in the *Church Manual*, however, especially in light of the 1946 "safeguard" about changing the *Manual*, gave the statement significant standing in Adventism, even if the church did not intend to consider it a formal creed.

In addition to the missing preamble, the 1931 statement differs most dramatically from the 1872 statement in

that it is fully Trinitarian.

If the church is to have an official statement of beliefs, however, many felt that it should actually be discussed and voted on its own merits by the General Conference in session. That happened in 1980 when the church adopted its current statement of 27 points (see Appendix VII). In the tradition of the 1872 statement a preamble reappears with two noteworthy features: (1) an explicit reference to a creed ("Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed") and (2) mention of the possibility of later modification ("Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference session when . . ."). The latter provision was designed to be a further safeguard against granting the statement the status of a creed in the classic sense.

The 1980 statement is like the 1931 statement in that it is fully Trinitarian, but departs from both earlier statements by describing Scripture as the "infallible revelation of His will," rather than "the only infallible rule of faith and practice" (1872) or "the only unerring rule of faith and practices" (1931). The deletion of the "only" from the 1980 statement reflects an attempt to preserve an authoritative role for the writings of Ellen White in Adventism. Fortunately, from the standpoint of "historic Adventism," the "only" still appears in the preamble, even if it is absent from the explicit statement on Scripture.

In 1988 the Ministerial Association of the General Conference published a commentary on the 1980 statement of beliefs, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . : A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines*. The preface to the book candidly admits that Adventists have been "reluctant to formalize a creed."⁶⁶ But because the book nowhere mentions the preamble that was voted as part of the 1980 statement, it does not have a formal basis for discussing either the Bible as the church's "only" creed, or the possibility that the document itself may be revised.

The Questions on Doctrine Debate

This significant event in the history of Adventism deserves full and thorough treatment, given the central role it has assumed in the current discussions. Such a treatment is likely to be pointless, however, if the participants in the debate insist on formulating the issues in terms of either/or alternatives.

One side stresses Jesus' role as our sinless substitute, arguing that His nature was like Adam's before the Fall. The other stresses Jesus' role as our example, arguing that He came in the "likeness of sinful flesh" with a nature like Adam's after the Fall.

Both sides can marshal Ellen White quotations in support of their positions, and both sides can claim devout and prominent personalities in the church among their proponents, including editors of "official" Adventist publications.

But the significant point for the discussion here is: *Adventists have never “formally” adopted a position on the question of just how Jesus’ nature compared with Adam’s and with ours. Neither has the church ever “formally” adopted a position on perfection and the precise nature of human obedience.* By contrast, all Adventists everywhere have always affirmed that God has called His children to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. All Adventists everywhere have always affirmed the Sabbath and the blessed Advent hope. All Adventists everywhere have always affirmed that Jesus lived without sin, was our example, and died for our sins.

Early Adventists linked the sanctuary and judgment doctrines to the Sabbath, the keeping of the commandments, and the three angels’ messages. But when Adventists seek to link the sanctuary doctrine to a precise definition of sin and obedience, they threaten not only to divide the church, but also to put at risk the very landmarks that are the foundation of the Adventist experience.

If the church is to find unity in Christ, it must first seek Christ. He will help the church remember what its historic landmarks are. When human beings seek to add to them or subtract from them, they put the church at risk. And often the very attempt to add or subtract tempts others to the opposite extreme. Thus the whole church is weakened and impoverished.

By the 1880s Ellen White was emphasizing increasingly that the variety in Scripture is designed of God for meeting the variety of human needs. “Human minds vary” is the first sentence in her manuscript 24 of 1886, the one discussing the inspiration of Scripture.⁶⁷ In *The Desire of Ages* she wrote: “Every individual has a life distinct from all others, and an experience differing essentially from theirs. God desires that our praise shall ascend to Him, marked by our own individuality.”⁶⁸

In 1889, in defense of her own ministry, she described her calling and preparation to meet a variety of human needs:

With the light communicated through the study of His Word, with the special knowledge given of *individual cases among His people under all circumstances and in every phase of experience*, can I now be in the same ignorance, the same mental uncertainty and spiritual blindness, as at the beginning of this experience? Will my brethren say that Sister White has been so dull a scholar that her judgment in this direction is no better than before she entered Christ’s school, to be trained and disciplined for a special work?⁶⁹

She then describes two types of extreme experiences that she often felt constrained to address:

When I see men and women taking the very course, or cherishing the very traits, which have imperiled other

souls and wounded the cause of God, and which the Lord has reproved again and again, how can I but be alarmed? When I see timid souls, burdened with a sense of their imperfections, yet conscientiously striving to do what God has said is right, and know that the Lord looks down and smiles on their faithful efforts, shall I not speak a word of encouragement to these poor trembling hearts? Shall I hold my peace because each individual case has not been pointed out to me in direct vision?⁷⁰

The church throughout the ages bears the same responsibility to work for “*people under all circumstances and in every phase of experience.*” We dare not allow a segment of the church with one kind of experience to dictate to the whole. In biblical terms, we cannot allow either the people who stress James or the people who emphasize Paul to hurt those whose experience in the Lord follows a different course.

Under the heading of the *Questions on Doctrine* debate it is appropriate to consider the vexed issue of character development in the light of the full variety of Ellen White’s quotations on the subject. Among Adventists today one can find a different system of “truth” built around each one of the three perspectives illustrated below:

1. His character is reproduced in our nature.

In our divine life we shall be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ. We shall no longer live the common life of selfishness, but Christ will live in us. *His character will be reproduced in our nature.*⁷¹

2. His character is beyond human reach.

He conquered Satan in the long fast of the wilderness, and when he came to Him as an angel of light, offering the dominion of the world in exchange for His worship; He made sacrifices that will never be required of man, *as man can never attain to His exalted character.*⁷²

3. He is the advocate for those whose character falls short.

But while the followers of Christ have sinned, they have not given themselves up to be controlled by the satanic agencies. They have repented of their sins and have sought the Lord in humility and contrition, and the divine Advocate pleads in their behalf. He who has been most abused by their ingratitude, who knows their sin and also their penitence, declares: “The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan. I gave My life for these souls. They are graven upon the palms of My hands. *They may have imperfections of character; they may have failed in their endeavors; but they have repented, and I have forgiven and accepted them.*”⁷³

We need to know that it is possible to become what God wants of us. We need to recognize how far we have

fallen from His ideal. And in the end we need to know that it is His grace, not human effort, that is the basis for our salvation. Different experiences will need to hear different emphases. Even the same person will, at different times in life, need to hear different emphases. If a particular emphasis enables some to worship God more wholeheartedly and to love their fellow human beings more fully, the church should be prepared to give them support. But should any group seek to impose their emphasis on the rest of the church, the church must remind them that this is an area of personal preference and personal responsibility.

In 1892 Ellen White declared that we could not say "that the unity of the church consists in viewing every text of Scripture in the very same light." And she explained why: Not everyone has the same "disposition" or "temperament," or "thinks in the very same channel"; not everyone has the same "experience." And in this instance, Ellen White defined the essence of truth in terms of the two great commands:

The great truths of the Word of God are so clearly stated that none need make a mistake in understanding them. When as individual members of the church, you love God supremely and your neighbor as yourself, there will be no need of labored efforts to be in unity, for there will be oneness in Christ as a natural result.⁷⁴

The three quotations on "character" cited above tend to accentuate the differences in the three perspectives. In some instances the only way a needed truth can strike home to a particular experience is to accentuate it so that it stands out with boldness and clarity.

The synthesizing quotations, however, must also be kept in the forefront of the church's experience so that all the needs of the church may be met. With reference to the believers' perception of their own sinfulness, their need of Christ, and their awareness of the awesome beauty of His character, a well-known passage from *Steps to Christ* perhaps gives the best synthesis of the three perspectives represented by the quotations noted above:

The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in broad and distinct contrast to His perfect nature. This is evidence that Satan's delusions have lost their power; that the vivifying influence of the Spirit of God is arousing you.

No deep-seated love for Jesus can dwell in the heart that does not realize its own sinfulness. The soul that is transformed by the grace of Christ will admire His divine character; but if we do not see our own moral deformity, it is unmistakable evidence that we have not had a view of the beauty and excellence of Christ.

The less we see to esteem in ourselves, the more we

shall see to esteem in the infinite purity and loveliness of our Saviour. A view of our sinfulness drives us to Him who can pardon; and when the soul, realizing its helplessness, reaches out after Christ, He will reveal Himself in power. The more our sense of need drives us to Him and to the Word of God, the more exalted views we shall have of His character, and the more fully we shall reflect His image.⁷⁵

The above quotation perhaps reveals why frustration and anger so frequently surface among those who seek to define the goal of Christian living in terms of sinless perfection. For to draw closer to Christ is to be less and less inclined to claim sinlessness. Thus, those who have defined their goal as sinless perfection face an agonizing dilemma: As they learn of Christ they will increasingly sense their own sinfulness. If then they ever begin to "sense" the attainment of sinless perfection, the goal that their theology has set for them, that would simply be proof of greater sinfulness. Dependence on God, rather than sinless perfection, would be a more satisfying goal experientially, for it stresses the maintenance of the connection with God rather than a predefined level of attainment.

Additional Factors in Contemporary Adventism

In addition to the major events and themes noted above, several other factors have had an unsettling effect on the church in recent decades. While the church has been blessed with vigorous growth in many parts of the world, the turmoil in North America has made the church vulnerable to criticism. No doubt a relationship can be drawn between the growth of independent "holiness" movements and the extent to which the mainstream church has appeared to be unfaithful to its past or faltering in its mission in the present. The following factors have all played a contributing role.

The Sanctuary Doctrine

Because a particular view of sanctification has been linked closely with the doctrines of sanctuary and judgment, some whose experience is more Pauline have been inclined to diminish the importance of this foundational landmark of Adventism. One of the tasks facing the church is the need to explore the way differing temperaments relate to particular perspectives on sanctuary and judgment.

The attacks on the sanctuary doctrine could be another instance in which "the errors of popular theology have driven many a soul to skepticism."⁷⁶ If an excessive "sanctification" emphasis makes the sanctuary doctrine vulnerable to attack from a "justification" perspective, those supporting the very emphasis that triggered the attack in the first place will simply redouble their efforts. The key elements in the Christology, soteriology, and anthropology of the

majority of the critical independents have found legitimation from voices within the mainstream of the church. To the extent that these voices claim to be the true representatives of "historic Adventism," the church has laid the foundation for the current divisiveness.

Authority of Ellen White

The tendency of Adventists to base theological and doctrinal positions on the writings of Ellen White to the neglect of Scripture has made her vulnerable to attack. Instead of each person or group citing only its favorite Ellen White quotations, it would be helpful if the church could rediscover how she addresses a wide variety of experiences, all of which are part of the body of Christ.

If the misuse and abuse of Ellen White's writings have led to the neglect of her ministry on the part of some, the reaction within the "holiness" movements has simply been to redouble their efforts to steep themselves in selected portions of her writings. But such intense preoccupation is selective and one-sided. Unless Adventism can find ways to incorporate the "holiness" element within the safety of the larger church, today's intense supporters of Ellen White in the dissident movements could well become her strongest opponents in the future. The pattern is well established historically. When the disenchantment comes and supporters turn into detractors, Ellen White's ministry will be placed at even greater risk.

Financial Losses in the Church

Loss of church funds and church properties have been a painful experience for the church in the latter part of the twentieth century. Some who keenly feel their obligation to be faithful stewards have struggled with the question of whether or not the church can be trusted. By claiming to be a path to greater holiness, some independent ministries have capitalized on the weakness of the church, leading some devout members away from the church rather than encouraging them to put their energies and resources into the work of making the mainstream church all that it should be.

Adaptation to Mainstream Culture

As Adventists have reaped the benefits of education, the result has been greater wealth and enhanced social standing. While some of the "standards" of Adventism are no doubt tied to cultural norms, the mainstream church could be open to criticism for losing its purpose and identity in contrast with the world. An independent ministry that seeks to return to the "old ways" is often attractive for those who are earnestly seeking true sanctification.

Adventism must remember that a Christian commitment that is faithful to Scripture calls God's people to be in the world but not of the world. In an affluent culture

Christians find it all too easy to forget the crying needs of the world. Mainstream Adventism may be tempted to forget the needs of the world because it has become too much like the world. But the highly critical "holiness" movements may even be more vulnerable to the temptation to forget the needs of the world. Intense introspection and a bitter, critical spirit tend to direct energies inward on the one hand and against fellow believers on the other. That is not historic Adventism at its best.

Historic Adventism: Summary and Application

This final summary will address the question of historic Adventism in terms of the four key aspects of church life identified initially: content, structure, spirit, and dissent. Specific application will be made to the critical independent ministries who are claiming to be the defenders of the true faith. While the primary context addressed will be the post-Ellen White era in which the church finds itself, references will be made to material discussed in the previous sections as well.

Content of the Faith: Adventist Teachings

"We, the undersigned, hereby associate ourselves together, as a church, taking the name of Seventh-day Adventists, covenanting to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ." That is the essence of historic Adventism, the simple covenant used to bind the first Adventists together as a denomination.

A short list of landmarks can be added by way of further definition. But with the possible exception of the "nonimmortality of the wicked" (Ellen White's phrase in *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, pp. 30, 31), all the landmarks were still sharply focused on commandments (Sabbath) and Advent. Among the early pioneers, the cleansing of the sanctuary itself was seen primarily as the means by which God focused the attention of the Advent believers on the Sabbath and the importance of God's holy law.

Adventists as a body have never defined "historic Adventism" to include particular perspectives on the nature of Christ, human nature, or the nature of obedience (sinless perfection). Indeed, all the formal statements of belief—the "unofficial" one of 1872, the first official one in 1931, and the one fully discussed and voted by a General Conference in session in 1980—have specifically avoided defining the precise nature of Christ either as pre-Fall or post-Fall, the one point that seems so very crucial to the critical independent "holiness" movements in Adventism.

To be sure, leaders of the church as well as dissidents have attempted at times to add further structure and specificity to the landmarks of Adventism. In 1888 the stance of Uriah Smith and G. I. Butler on the law in Galatians and the horns in Daniel 7 implied that every Adventist position

had been and must be fully specified. In the name of her Lord and the Adventist landmarks, however, Ellen White strenuously objected to such additional specificity.

If Adventism is to meet the needs of all people around the world, the landmarks must remain simple and straightforward. The Bible will be our only creed. Complex theological definitions, the Trinity, for example, may serve the church well in general but cannot be imposed as a test for all Adventists everywhere.

Adventism can expect fresh insights into truth, "present truth" that will enhance the appreciation of old landmarks. Such an expectation has always been a part of historic Adventism and is reaffirmed in the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs voted in 1980. When "present truth" is of a complex nature, however, it may be more helpful for some in the church than for others. In such a case it cannot be imposed on the church as a whole. Remembering our non-Trinitarian past as well as the simplicity of our landmarks should encourage a certain humility in the church and lead us to resist any attempt by one segment of the church to impose its views on the rest.

Structure: Church Organization and Procedures

While early Adventists sensed well the dangers in church organization, they concluded that the advantages outweighed the disadvantages. The dangers that the pioneers sensed, however, have sometimes been a reality in the church. The tendency to control, to stifle creativity, and to impose a false sense of unity can all be documented from the early decades of the organized church.

We should not be so naive as to think that we are now free from such dangers. For Adventists, it simply is easier to be explicit with the problems in the past because Ellen White identified them for us. Yet certain parallels can be drawn, parallels that can apply to the mainstream church and to leadership elements of the critical independent ministries. While an authoritarian style of leadership can cause problems in the church, as the writings of Ellen White so clearly testify, the heavy-handed style and often devious methods of the critical voices in the church indicate that they are no better equipped to serve the body of Christ than are some of the leaders whom they are so quick to criticize.

While Ellen White encouraged openness and fairness in the church, and urged leaders to encourage creativity and innovation, she did not abandon the leaders who made mistakes, even when they seemed rigid and unbending. Her nonauthoritarian stance is revealed by the fact that she did not grant a blank check even to the General Conference. A properly representative General Conference would have authority. But that did not mean every General Conference at all times. Yet she continued to work with those in leadership even when she felt they were moving in the wrong direction.

Spirit: The Ethos and Atmosphere in Which the Church Conducts Its Work

The anger, bitterness, and unethical activities of the critical "holiness" movements raise serious questions about their understanding of "holiness" and sanctification. If there is one point that emerges clearly from Ellen White's observations of the 1888 General Conference session, it is that the spirit in which we carry on our work is more important than the "teachings" we are seeking to establish. Or put another way, the "spirit" is the test of the teachings. A letter from Ellen White to William and Mary White contains recollections of her conversations at Minneapolis that make the matter clear:

"I say if your views on the law in Galatians, and the fruits, are of the character I have seen in Minneapolis and ever since up to this time, my prayer is that I may be as far from your understanding and interpretation of the Scriptures as it is possible for me to be. I am afraid of any application of Scripture that needs such a spirit and bears such fruit as you have manifested. One thing is certain, I shall never come into harmony with such a spirit as long as God gives me my reason."⁷⁷

From the 1901 General Conference session Ellen White made it clear that prayer, not argument, was the clue to the church's success. "Let every one of you go home," she told the delegates, "not to chat, chat, chat, but to pray. Go home and pray. Talk with God. Go home and plead with God to mold and fashion you after the divine similitude."⁷⁸

If the church could pray for the angry and critical ones, perhaps the Spirit could lead the church's detractors to pray once more for the church, not in bitter anger, but with love and compassion. From Ellen White's perspective, the result of putting God first is healing between brothers and sisters. "When men cease to depend upon men," she wrote, "when they make God their efficiency, then there will be more confidence manifested in one another. Our faith in God is altogether too feeble and our confidence in one another altogether too meager."⁷⁹

Dissent: Criticism and the Parting of the Ways

The church must make room for diversity of opinion and genuine dissent. The attempt to impose unity ultimately splinters the church. Yet in one sense, diversity is only helpful when the spirit is right. "If the old man was purged from every heart," she wrote to Jones and Waggoner, "then there would be greater safety in discussion."⁸⁰

But when mistakes are made by church leaders, they must be put right even at the cost of some public disarray. Although Ellen White was keenly disappointed when Butler contributed to the furor in the church by going public with his side of the law in Galatians debate, she made it quite clear that openness and fairness was the lesser of two evils:

I believe now that nothing can be done but open discussion. You circulated your pamphlet; now it is only fair that Dr. Waggoner should have just as fair a chance as you have had. I think the whole thing is not in God's order. But, brethren, we must have no unfairness.⁸¹

While the church has seldom been perfect in dealing with the human problems it faces, the evidence assembled in this report suggests that the Adventist community has labored long and hard to understand and work with the critical dissenters who define "historic Adventism" in their own unique way. The church has done its best to be gentle and fair. But it is becoming increasingly clear that the church cannot allow them to impose their definition of "historic Adventism" on the church as a whole.

The history of the church reveals that a brother or sister can choose to make a life-or-death issue of any point of faith or practice, no matter how small. When that happens, if all attempts at reasonable and Christlike conversation fail, then there must be a parting of the ways. The landmarks must be clear; there must be room for present truth. But the crucial decisions cannot be made by a segment of the church, however devout and intense their convictions. The church as a whole will decide. That is the true heritage of historic Adventism.

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CHAPTER 4

ELLEN WHITE AND DISAFFECTION MOVEMENTS

Introduction

From the beginning of her commission as God's special messenger, Ellen White was instructed to meet those whose character or teachings threatened the unity of the church or the integrity of its last-day message. While this was only one part of her varied ministry, she confronted subversive elements throughout her lifetime. At the age of 17 she was sent to deliver messages to time-setters and spiritualizers of a personal Second Advent.¹ And at age 81 she warned the church regarding a counterfeit Pentecostal experience that included speaking in tongues and casting out demons.²

Her unique position as the Lord's messenger gave Ellen White insights into attractive teachings and movements that, unless checked, would lead to discord, fanaticism, or outright apostasy. She knew from both divine enlightenment and personal experience in meeting radical or dissident persons that apostasy is seldom a sudden happening.

In a passage familiar to many, Ellen White sketched the downward path to perdition, the beginning of which may be unrelated to theology. She wrote:

Satan knows how to make his attacks. He works upon minds to excite jealousy and dissatisfaction toward those at the head of the work. The gifts are next questioned; then, of course, they have but little weight, and instruction given through vision is disregarded. Next follows skepticism in regard to the vital points of our faith, the pillars of our position, then doubt as to the Holy Scriptures, and then the downward march to perdition.³

This chapter will examine three dissident movements in Adventist history, noting their key differences with the church, how leadership responded, and more particularly, how Ellen White met the challenge.

The first movement was a textbook case of overt rebellion. Those involved were bent on discrediting the leaders and rejecting Ellen White's ministry. The second held Ellen White's writings in high regard but concluded that her testimonies of reproof to the church actually constituted a message of rejection. The third threatened the foundation message and mission of Seventh-day Adventists, though its theories were accepted as wonderfully advanced light by some prominent church leaders.

In order to understand better why church leaders and

Ellen White responded as they did to these varied messages, as much context as possible will be provided within the size limits of this document. This will make clear what these movements were espousing, as well as what they were *perceived* to be espousing by those charged to "preserve the waymarks" that have made us what we are.

Model One: Disaffection Turned Rebellion The *Messenger* and Marion Parties

At various times in the history of our church, offshoot movements and apostasies have involved leaders of the church. In Ellen White's lifetime, however, only one movement eventually organized its sympathizers into a distinct denomination—the Church of God (Adventist).

While the Church of God has had its own splinter groups, the origin of the main body has usually been linked with the remnants of the *Messenger* party, first "organized" in 1853 by H. S. Case and C. P. Russell. In this paper, the interest is not in the historical evolution of the various parties, but with the fact that the *Messenger* party, and later, the Marion party, constituted the first organizational challenge to what was to become the Seventh-day Adventist Church.⁴

It was not until 1860 that the name Seventh-day Adventist was adopted, and the General Conference itself was not organized with a constitution until 1863. Nevertheless, the *Messenger* party threatened to break the unity established among early Sabbatarian Adventists who subscribed to the positions espoused in the *Review*. A rival paper was started in 1854, called the *Messenger of Truth*. This became the primary channel for gathering supporters to the *Messenger* party cause.

The subsequent defection of two Adventist ministers, J. M. Stephenson and D. P. Hall, extended its influence another two or three years until the paper's publication ceased for lack of financial support, and the movement's sympathizers disbanded. Within five years, however, many from the former *Messenger* party were revived by Gilbert Cranmer, who, being refused a license to preach for Seventh-day Adventists, organized his followers into a group known first as the Church of Christ.

Cranmer's paper, *The Hope of Israel*, lasted about two years but found new life as the medium for another disaffection in Marion, Iowa, involving B. F. Snook and W. H. Brinkerhoff, the president and secretary, respectively, of

the newly formed Iowa Conference. About half the Marion church joined the new movement, known as the Marion party, and were disfellowshipped in 1866. Adherents of this group eventually organized into the Church of God (Adventist) and Church of God (Seventh Day).

The Issues

While no known copies of the *Messenger* are in existence, the *Review* provides numerous clues as to the contents of its pages. The editors denounced the leadership of James White, charging him with financial mismanagement of funds contributed to the *Review* office. They also promoted theological views on prophecy in complete variance with those affirmed in the *Review* and made every effort to discredit the influence of Ellen White's visions, while misrepresenting the church's position on how belief in the visions related to church membership.

The later Marion party issued articles and tracts expressing similar criticisms of the Whites and attacked continuing efforts of the denomination to organize. In time the name "Seventh-day Adventist" in contrast to "Church of God" became another disputed point.

The characteristics and message of the *Messenger* and Marion parties may be summarized as follows:

1. The motives and character of church leadership were bitterly criticized.
2. A rival paper was printed and sent to subscribers of the *Review*.
3. A controversial theological position (the "age-to-come" doctrine) was proclaimed prominently.
4. Misuse of contributed church funds was alleged.
5. Ellen White's visions were declared to be untrustworthy, yet were being used by the leadership as another rule of faith.
6. The church's organizational structure was rejected as a form of "Jesuitical hierarchy."
7. A distinct organizational break with Seventh-day Adventists resulted.

How the Church Responded

As mentioned earlier, the *Messenger* party's disaffection occurred before the Seventh-day Adventist Church had even adopted its name. There was no General Conference and no local state conferences. The *Review* was issued by a three-member publishing committee, with James White as editor utilizing its pages to keep Sabbatarian Adventists united around the three angels' messages. The pages of the *Review*, therefore, provide the major source of understanding of how our early leaders responded to the challenge of rebellion in the ranks.

The *Review* at that time included numerous reports of meetings and communications from believers scattered across the states. In that forum that *Review* published a

statement signed by leading members of five Michigan churches stating that they no longer considered H. S. Case "qualified to travel and teach the third angel's message." James White, the editor, prefaced the two-paragraph statement with the words: "We felt that we should do our dear brethren in Michigan injustice by longer withholding their statements concerning him." No specific reference to Case's views was given, but the comment was made that he was stirring up "division."⁵

Four months later, under the heading "Mark Them Which Cause Divisions," three paragraphs of warning were published concerning Case and Russell. The reason stated for the warning was "that our brethren scattered abroad are liable to be exposed to the influence of these men."⁶ Again, no specifics as to their teachings were given.

Eleven weeks later, in the November 7, 1854, issue, the publishing committee addressed a column-and-a-half statement "to the readers of the *Advent Review*." In it they set forth their policy of refusing to "so far lose sight of our mission as to come down and meet all the inventions of their malignity." "To engage in such a controversy would be to leave the work of God, and come down to the same level with those who are engaged in this attack."⁷

The committee members added, however, that "it may be duty that we state some facts in regard to these persons," and they solicited testimonies from readers regarding those things of which they had personal knowledge. The notice concluded with this proviso:

As these disaffected individuals influence the minds of some honest persons by their slanderous falsehoods, we would say that if any brother or sister wishes an explanation of any of their statements they can obtain it by addressing the publishing committee.⁸

While the offer likely envisioned personal rather than published responses, in at least one instance the committee chose to use the pages of the *Review* to reply to a questioner who asked about the truthfulness of two statements he had read in the *Messenger of Truth*.

In the letters that appeared from subscribers are occasional references to the *Messenger* influence and evidence that their paper was circulating quite widely. For the most part, however, the *Review* maintained its policy of keeping its pages free from the fray fueled by its opponents. Nevertheless, early in 1855, James White devoted an *Extra* of the *Review* to a discussion of the party, about which he later commented that "we have good reason to believe that that sheet has relieved many minds, and has accomplished much good."⁹

Similarly, in the aftermath of the Snook and Brinkerhoff defection, as A. C. Long and J. S. Green produced tracts against the church and against Ellen White's ministry, a spe-

cial *Supplement* of the *Review* was prepared to meet the charges.¹⁰

Ellen White's Response

In June 1855 Ellen White received specific instruction regarding the influence of the *Messenger* party and the response to be taken by the church to the charges of its leaders. She wrote:

I saw that the people of God must arouse and put on the armor. Christ is coming, and the great work of the last message of mercy is of too much importance for us to leave it and come down to answer such falsehoods, misrepresentations, and slanders as the *Messenger* party have fed upon and scattered abroad. Truth, present truth, we must dwell upon it. We are doing a great work, and cannot come down. Satan is in all this, to divert our minds from the present truth and the coming of Christ. Said the angel: "Jesus knows it all."¹¹

J. N. Loughborough and four other leaders who had agreed upon a distribution of labor in meeting the continuing attacks of the *Messenger* were present when this vision was given. This was only a few months after the publication of the *Review Extra* mentioned above. Of this June 1855 revelation, Loughborough remembered Ellen White's remarks, in substance, as follows:

You brethren have made a mistake in your plans to refute the lies of the *Messenger* paper. When you answer one of their lies, they will make two more to match it. It is a trick of the enemy to keep you following them up, to draw you away from working in the interest that is now so evidently arising with the public. You let the *Messenger* people alone, and pay no attention to their work, and in less than six weeks they will be at war among themselves. That paper will go down; and when they cease its publication, you will find that our ranks have doubled.¹²

The prediction was fulfilled. By the time the paper discontinued publication in 1857, the number of Sabbatarian believers had more than doubled.

On November 16, 1855, the leaders of the church convened in Battle Creek to discuss the future management of the *Review*. Among the actions taken was the following "unanimous expression of the brethren assembled":

Whereas, Inquiries have been made as to what course we designed to pursue in the future, in reference to the misstatements of the enemies of present truth, therefore, for the information and satisfaction of the brethren abroad,

Resolved, That we henceforth devote ourselves exclusively to the advocacy and defense of the present truth, committing ourselves in all things to Him who judgeth righteously, after the example of our Pattern, in affliction and in patience.¹³

Four days later Ellen White received another vision, which was to become *Testimony for the Church*, No. 1. She was again shown the case of Stephenson and Hall, and she reiterated the view that she expressed in her vision of June:

Some honest hearts have been influenced by them, concluding that they must have at least some cause for their statements, thinking them incapable of uttering so glaring falsehoods. I saw that such will have evidence of the truth of these matters. *The church of God should move straight along, as though there were not such a people in the world.*¹⁴

Analysis

Ellen White's response to the rebellion was unequivocal. The energies of the church were not to be expended in answering every accusation and falsehood. Even honest-hearted souls would eventually have the evidence needed to judge the movement's character.

Does this instruction mean that there is never a time to counteract falsehoods and meet opposition? In considering this question, one should take into account at least two factors characterizing these movements. First, the *Messenger* party was a case of overt rebellion. Both James and Ellen White, among others, had personally worked with the originators of the movement; thus the leadership was well acquainted with their purposes. Also, the nature of the accusations brought against the leadership, as publicized in their rival paper, gave further evidence to its readers that the movement was not attempting simply to reform; it was bent on destroying confidence in the *Review* and its supporters. In other words, believers were confronted with choosing between the *Review* and the *Messenger*.

Second, in connection with her June 1855 vision, Ellen White made the following interesting statement:

We shall suffer some from their lying tongues and misrepresentations, yet we should bear it all patiently; for they will not injure the cause of God, *now they have left us*, as much as they would have injured it by their influence had they remained with us.¹⁵

At the time of her vision the *Messenger* party's dissociation from the *Review* was an established fact. They had "left us." While they might continue to "injure the cause of God," they at least would not be working *as if* in sympathy with the main body of believers. It was after this break was apparent that the instruction was given to Ellen White that "the great work of the last message of mercy is of too much importance for us to leave it and come down to answer such falsehoods."

Summary Principle 1: The church should not get sidetracked from proclaiming its message by answering the falsehoods of evident opponents.

Model Two: Judgment Time for the Church A. W. Stanton and W. F. Caldwell

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, in Ellen White's day, was not exempt from failures, missed opportunities, and unfaithful leadership. This was demonstrated clearly at the General Conference session of 1888. Ellen White was instructed that the "terrible experience at the Minneapolis conference" was "one of the saddest chapters in the history of the believers in present truth."¹⁶

It is not surprising, then, that in the years following this episode, as well as at other low points in the church's past, there have arisen individuals with a special burden to purify the church, whether of organizational defects or of its Laodicean condition. In the book *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pages 15-62, a series of articles by Ellen White are reproduced that were written largely in response to one brother's sincere belief that the Seventh-day Adventist Church had fallen to the same level spiritually as the other religious bodies described in Scripture as "Babylon."

In the summer of 1892 A. W. Stanton was one of a local committee of five chosen to care for advancing the work in the state of Montana. Although he had been elected to serve as secretary of the Tract Society for the Upper Columbia Conference, headquartered in Washington State, Montana members "fought" against losing him, and their efforts prevailed. He subsequently was appointed secretary for the Montana Tract Society.¹⁷

After receiving several attractive offers for his livestock and property, Stanton decided to sell and put his assets, approximately \$40,000, into the cause "where it will do the most good."¹⁸ His intentions radically changed in a few short weeks. Apparently he became disgusted with certain wrongful actions among workers of his acquaintance, which helped to give rise to a critical attitude toward the ministry and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in general. His popularity among believers in the Northwest no doubt contributed to the quick-spreading support that was generated for his judgment message.

How the Church Responded

Rumors of Stanton's "new light" began to spread among laity and leaders alike. In July 1892 J. W. Watt, one of Montana's few ministers, wrote to the secretary of the General Conference, among others, stating:

Brother A. W. Stanton has concluded that he has new light for our people and this new light is to the effect that the SDA Church is Babylon and that all true believers must and will come out of her. In view of this, he has withdrawn all his financial support from us, which leaves us with but \$38.79 in the treasury, and some of the members have asked for a part of that. He says the Lord has shown him that the plagues will

begin to fall next year. I think it is a very clear case of fanaticism, and the strangest thing of it all is he is carrying quite a number of our best tithe-paying members with him. . . .

[He] is liable to do the cause great damage as he is going to try and stop all the workers in this field who will not receive his new light. [He] has already advised the Bible workers to stop. He has got some of our leading brethren in the notion of joining him in selling all they have and putting it into the work of spreading this new light.¹⁹

Elder Watt then added, "I have just arrived here and have had no special talk with him, but those who have talked with him say he will not receive any counsel at all. There seems to be no denunciation in the Bible too hard for him to apply to our ministers, especially our leaders. He also takes a stand against any organization."

Two weeks later Dan T. Jones, district superintendent for Montana, wrote to the General Conference president, O. A. Olsen, giving another perspective on Stanton's teachings. Referring to Watt's communications, Jones wrote:

When Brother Watt went to Livingston [Montana] the last time, he visited some of the brethren there and heard reports of what Brother Stanton was saying and doing, and before seeing Brother Stanton himself he wrote to Brother Colcord and some others in reference to it. When he came to see and talk with Brother Stanton, he found that the reports he had heard were not altogether correct. In fact, I infer from what he says that some of them were very far from being correct; so Brother Watt felt under obligation to apologize to Brother Stanton, and acknowledge to him that he had acted hastily in doing as he did.

Brother Stanton seems to manifest a good spirit as far as I can determine from his letters to me. He says, "I have no objections to make, no axes to grind. Am only anxious that the work should go on; but feel deeply the degradation that has been heaped upon me. May God have mercy upon them."²⁰

Jones mentioned that Stanton had resigned from his position as secretary of the Tract Society, but his courteous letters had opened the way for him to write to Stanton freely. "I still have hopes that we can save him to the cause," he added.

Within another two weeks Stanton had withdrawn his support from the church, and quite a number of fellow members followed his example. "He had decided to withhold his tithes entirely, and not to support SDA ministers in any way. What money he had [invested] in the Pacific Press he had drawn out," wrote Jones.²¹

In his September district report to the GC president, Jones provided an update on the work in Montana, and outlined his intended approach to Stanton's movement:

It has been a perplexing thing for me to know just what advice to give Brother Watt under the circumstances. I have thought, however, that the best thing that could be done would be to let him run his course before making any decided opposition to it. I remember that that plan worked well in Battle Creek when that Sister ———, from Washington, had her short day there two years ago this summer. If open opposition had been made against her, I . . . [doubt] that she would have been so effectually exposed and her influence so entirely destroyed as it was by letting her have her own course, until she showed to discerning persons the spirit that she was of and the nature of her work.

I have had some hopes that Brother Stanton would have sense enough to see the error of the positions which he has taken and retrace his steps. If he does not, however, I am of the opinion that it would be better to let him run his course and develop himself, and then we come in and save what can be saved. He is a man of very determined disposition, and opposition would only strengthen it, and as he has money and influence, he would be able to more than cope with the efforts that might be made against him. . . .

The only difficulty in carrying out these plans is that there are some in Livingston and vicinity who are anxious to rush in and put down fanaticism as they call it. They have already done much to fan the flames and make matters worse. I have written to these different parties and advised moderation, but it is difficult to handle them at so long range.²²

Shortly after this, Stanton came down to Oakland to talk with Jones, and the two had several lengthy interviews. The results were positive. In the first interview of about five hours, Jones made no reference to Stanton's course in Montana, but discussed matters "just as he brought them up." By the time the interview closed, Stanton requested another session in order to explain his position, "for he said that he held some positions that were not in harmony with our doctrines." Jones told him he would be "very glad to talk with him, and we would take our Bibles and study them together. I told him that if he had any light that I did not have, I wanted it, and he said that if he was in the wrong in any positions that he had taken, he wanted to know it."

In that spirit the two men studied together. Jones reported that he did not show Stanton that his positions were unsound "by opposing his positions and refuting the argument he brought, but simply by explaining some lines of prophecy and some texts that came up, in a mild way, without pressing anything at all." Stanton "gave up his positions, and then became very anxious about the work in Montana," feeling that he had "committed a grave mistake" in the break he had made there. He said he would "do all he could to counteract the influence that he had had and to bring those that had followed him back into harmony with

the body."²³

Stanton's apparent turnaround lasted only about three months. By the end of 1892 he had returned to his former ideas and soon thereafter had even convinced one of Montana's ministers that his work was of God.

Early in 1893 Stanton published a 64-page tract called *The Loud Cry! Babylon Fallen! Weighed in the Balances—Found Wanting*. (The pamphlet is part of the E. G. White Estate collection.) The thrust of the tract was twofold: (1) the spiritual bankruptcy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, particularly its ministers, and (2) the corresponding applicability of the message of Revelation 18 ("Babylon has fallen") to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He quoted extensively from Ellen White's writings (more than half the content of the tract), including what he called "late Testimonies not published yet," in order to support his contentions.

Copies of the *Loud Cry* pamphlet were sent broadcast and translated into Danish and German. Supporters saw to it that delegates to the 1893 General Conference session were supplied with copies as well. The president of the General Conference personally replied to inquiries as to its origin, and the *Review* issued a one-paragraph "Word of Caution," stating that "it is no part of the work which is endorsed by Seventh-day Adventists, and none should suffer themselves to become confused by it."²⁴

Meanwhile, W. F. Caldwell, a recent convert and lay member in Pennsylvania, concluded a week of intense Bible study, convinced that a "deathsleep" had overtaken God's people in that they "were not living up to the standard in many ways." Passages from Ellen White's writings had further convinced him that "Seventh-day Adventist leaders had closed their ears against God's truth, and [God] had called [him] to enlighten the people on some important advance light."²⁵

Caldwell wrote to the General Conference president about his recent experience, requesting permission to present his findings to the ministers assembling for the institute preceding the General Conference session so that "God may have opportunity to move upon them to change their lessons accordingly."²⁶ Olsen refused his request, stating that "arrangements [for the meetings] have been made, and they will be followed as closely as possible," further suggesting that he not attend.²⁷

Upon receiving Olsen's reply, Caldwell wrote back that he was "much pained to note its tone," and punctuated his displeasure with a series of quotations from the Bible and Ellen White, such as:

The rebuke of the Lord will be upon those who would be guardians of the doctrine, who would bar the way that greater light shall not come to the people.²⁸

Let no one run the risk of interposing himself between

the people and the message of heaven.²⁹

The Lord will work through humble instruments. . . . The laborers will be qualified rather by the unction of His Spirit than by the training [of] literary institutions.³⁰

In addition, he expressed his belief that "as sure as the Lord liveth, my brother, this is the last conference that will ever sit on this earth,"³¹ a remark Olsen denounced as time-setting.³²

Caldwell went to Battle Creek (in spite of the lack of an invitation by Olsen) and had "several meetings" with a committee of "judicious and careful brethren" appointed by Elder Olsen to "hear what he had to say and give him counsel and advice."³³ While at the conference, Caldwell received a copy of Stanton's *Loud Cry* tract, which carried greater weight in his mind than the leaders' counsel. He later wrote: "As it appeared to prove just what I had been convinced of before, I was very anxious to see him [Stanton]. . . . After spending three days together, we were both more assured than ever that we were right."³⁴

At Stanton's request and financing, Caldwell immediately traveled to Australia to proclaim the warning message (without even returning home to say goodbye to his family). Aboard ship he spent most of his time studying the *Testimonies*.

Shortly after reaching Australia, Caldwell met with G. B. Starr, who spent a number of hours in discussion with him. Starr asked if Caldwell had seen the testimony Ellen White had recently written to Stanton. He had not, nor had Stanton received it by the time Caldwell had left America. Starr lent him a copy, which he read. This left him "unsettled," but not convinced. He wanted an opportunity to explain his and Stanton's views personally to Ellen White and receive her response.³⁵

Ellen White's Response

The first communication from Ellen White regarding the Stanton movement was the letter lent to Caldwell by Starr in which she wrote directly to Stanton concerning his teachings. The letter is reprinted in *Testimonies to Ministers*, pages 58-62. Apparently she had not yet received a copy of the tract, as she made no mention of it, referring only to what she had understood or "learned" regarding his positions.

Ellen White's letter to Stanton emphasized five key points:

1. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is not Babylon.
2. None should seek to substantiate such a message from the *Testimonies*.
3. The suggestion to withhold tithes and offerings is in direct contradiction to Malachi 3.
4. We are near the end, but the Lord is not in any mes-

sage that sets a time for Christ's coming.

5. In spite of "tares among the wheat," God is leading a church, "not stray offshoots, not one here and one there, but a people."

Caldwell felt that Ellen White had been misinformed regarding at least three of Stanton's teachings, hence he composed a 20-page letter to her, recounting his conversion experience, and explaining how, through study of the Scriptures and Ellen White's recent testimonies, he had come to his conclusions. Among the points he laid out before her were the following (see Appendix XLIV for the complete letter):

1. In Revelation 3 the Laodicean church is predicted to be "spued out" of Christ's mouth, without any condition, while counsel is given only to individuals.
2. Ellen White, herself, had recently appealed, "Will the church see where she has fallen?"³⁶
3. Ellen White had said that Ezekiel 9 refers to Seventh-day Adventists, and that the Lord's sanctuary—church—would be the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God.
4. Neither Caldwell nor Stanton were time-setters.
5. "Stanton does not say the SDA Church is Babylon, but that by rejecting light—especially [the] Laodicean message—she rejects Christ."
6. Time is too short to "cleanse" the church, so Christ calls His people out of it, so they will not "receive of her plagues."
7. "Stanton does not refute obligation to pay tithes but thinks all should put everything into God's cause."³⁷

Caldwell later recalled that during the days he was waiting for Ellen White's personal reply, the "real struggle" began. "None but God knows how hard Satan and his emissaries worked for me during those few days," he wrote. Then the clouds seemed to break. He continued:

One Sunday I strolled down to the park where the socialists were holding an open-air meeting. You know how they talk, "Down with the government, down with the judges, away with these oppressive laws," etc., always trying to tear down, but never having any idea of a better way, or in fact, of any substitute. The Spirit of the Lord was by my side, and showed me that I was doing the same kind of work. I could not silence that voice. The similarity of their work and mine opened before me more clearly every time I tried to excuse myself.³⁸

Soon thereafter, Caldwell received the letter he was anxiously awaiting (see *Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 63-69).

Ellen White, while not questioning his "sincerity or honesty," made clear that he was mistaken in his conclusions. Those whom Christ spewed out of His mouth were those persons "who have made great profession, but have not kept in step with their Leader." The church itself "is

not to be disorganized or broken up into independent atoms," as would result if the message to leave the church was followed.

There is in some of the members of the church, pride, self-sufficiency, stubborn unbelief, and a refusing to yield their ideas, although evidence may be piled upon evidence which makes the message to the Laodicean church applicable. *But that will not blot out the church that it will not exist.* Let both tares and wheat grow together until the harvest. Then it is the angels that do the work of separation.³⁹

Caldwell received the letter in the spirit in which it was written and decided to write a confession of his experience and views. This was soon published in the *Review*. Writing to Ellen White, he recounted that his first conversion was a "rich one, but nothing in comparison with this one. When I lie down at night and when I rise in the morning, my heart is lifted to God in praise, that He has a church on earth and has given me the exalted privilege of throwing my lot in with them."⁴⁰

Meanwhile, Stanton's tracts were still circulating, and certain of Ellen White's *Testimonies* were continuing to be cited in support of his message. But any doubt as to her sympathies with the movement were soon dispelled when a three-part series of articles titled "The Remnant Church Not Babylon" ran in the *Review* (see *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 32-62). In this series Ellen White expressed her dismay that "in compiling this work, they have used my name and writings for the support of that which I disapprove and denounce as error."⁴¹

The dangers involved in the Stanton movement were of sufficient concern to Ellen White that she halted her work on *The Desire of Ages* in order to prepare several communications to counteract its teachings. In one of these writings she issued the following warning:

When anyone is drawing apart from the organized body of God's commandment-keeping people, when he begins to weigh the church in his human scales and begins to pronounce judgment against them, then you may know that God is not leading him. He is on the wrong track.⁴²

Ellen White did not hesitate to strike forthrightly at the mistaken message that Stanton and Caldwell felt called of God to proclaim. She even used the pages of the *Review* to do so, with names included. But this public repudiation of their teachings did not lessen her heartfelt concern for these misguided members. She ministered to them personally, even to the extent of later employing Caldwell on her own staff. Stanton's subsequent connections with the denomination are not known.

Analysis

In comparing the church's and Ellen White's response to the Stanton movement with the earlier *Messenger* and Marion rebellions, several significant differences may be noted. The Stanton movement saw itself as providing the last hope for those of God's faithful people who were still clinging to a church that had changed leaders and did not know it. There was no theological argument with the church's major beliefs, except in the area of interpreting Revelation 18. Ellen White's writings were considered inspired, and quoted as authoritatively supporting the movement's description of the low spiritual condition of the church.

The rapid spread of Stanton's message was undoubtedly another factor in the church's response. He had the funds to scatter his tracts around the globe in three languages and to send "missionaries" to both Europe and Australia, places where our work had only recently taken hold.

Eventually a fair amount of time was spent by church leaders in personally ministering to the individuals involved. Initial handling of the matter, however, was flawed on at least two counts. First, the tendency to report and react only to rumors of what Stanton was teaching not only further distanced him from the organization but produced greater polarization between his sympathizers and loyal church members. It also distorted attempts to refute his views accurately.

Second, church leaders intimated that both Stanton and Caldwell were mentally unstable, something that further convinced Caldwell of the leadership's blindness to spiritual truths. Writing of his early burden to share his "new light," Caldwell touched on this point:

Our state conference president, to whom I also wrote, gave me some good advice, the effect of which was more than destroyed by his advising me to take more exercise, and not study too hard. I took that as an insinuation that I was weak-minded. You may be sure that Satan did not allow any such remarks to pass without fully impressing me with all they could, or might mean, and the most kindly meant advice often seemed to me to be just the opposite.⁴³

Caldwell's full-page confession in the *Review* expressed his continual praise to God "for bringing me in contact with Brethren Starr and Rousseau, whose kind and wise treatment of me have saved me from the snare of Satan." But, he added:

My experience has taught me that we cannot do this [restore one from error] by condemning; for to tell the erring one he is crazy, a fanatic, or weak-minded does not help him; but if we show by our loving manner that we regard him as a brother still, and get him to tell us

of his feelings, and sympathize with him and prove to him that we believe him to be honest, then gradually lead on and inquire for his reason for holding certain positions, it is easy to reach the erring; at least, I felt such means denoted friends.⁴⁴

Ellen White's immediate response to the *Loud Cry* movement ended its short life by showing the sharp contrast between a message built on condemnation of the church's "divinely appointed ministry" and one built on confidence in God's "supreme regard" for His "enfeebled and defective" church.

Summary Principle 2: False teachers "are to be met and opposed, not because they are bad men, but because they are teachers of falsehood and are endeavoring to put upon falsehood the stamp of truth."⁴⁵ They should be treated, however, as Christ treats His erring church.

Model Three: When to Meet an Iceberg The Crisis of 1903

Perhaps the greatest threat to the integrity of our church's message and mission during Ellen White's lifetime was the confrontation between the General Conference leadership and Dr. John Harvey Kellogg. The controversy was multifaceted, involving our medical, educational, and ministerial forces. It included lawsuits, purgings, tests of orthodoxy, and battles over the control of institutions. Ellen White's personal and prophetic ministry were assaulted as never before, with local newspapers following every twist and turn of the ugly affair.

The full range of issues involved in the Kellogg crisis is well documented in several of our denominational history texts.⁴⁶ Our major focus is on the *timing* of the church's public confrontation with Kellogg and his associates. A rift was rapidly widening between the two parties, yet for a considerable time it was kept largely behind the scenes.

Ellen White herself, while privately communicating her frustration with Kellogg's policies, refrained from openly reproving one she had called "the Lord's physician," hoping that harmony among the various parties could be achieved. Finally in 1903 she received the dramatic vision of a ship in heavy fog suddenly finding itself confronted with a towering iceberg. Then she "heard the words, like a voice from our Captain, 'Meet it!'"⁴⁷ What determined the timing of that divine order?

The Setting

A. G. Daniells, the General Conference president, called church leaders together for the first Autumn Council of the church to meet at its new headquarters in the nation's capital. In August 1903 the General Conference had moved from Battle Creek to Washington, D.C., setting up temporary quarters in the very shadow of the Capitol. Now the members of the General Conference Committee

were meeting together to discuss plans for the advancement of the work in and around Washington.

One item not on the agenda began to impede the progress of the council. Over the past months the administrative tensions between Dr. Kellogg and the GC Committee had become compounded by theological controversy. The doctor's new book, *The Living Temple*, had been published against General Conference recommendation, and its sale was being urged upon ministers in the field. There was nothing objectionable about the health topics presented, but the subtle intermingling of what was being called the "new philosophy" made the book controversial. What many church leaders recognized to be pantheistic tendencies, Dr. Kellogg's supporters believed to be the foundation of a great new movement.

In spite of sharp conflicts among committee members and personal confrontations, no public condemnation of the doctor or his book had yet appeared in denominational papers. Nor had Ellen White made her position known. Not until August 1903 did the tensions come to the notice of the church as a whole.

How the Church Responded

In that month the editors of the *Review* took a clear stand against the plans of Dr. Kellogg and his associates to reopen the original Battle Creek College. This proposal was made in spite of the fact that the college had been moved to Berrien Springs with the express purpose of getting it out of the city. The reopening was regarded as being in direct opposition to Ellen White's warnings against the building up of a great center at Battle Creek. Debate over the plans continued, and the friction between Dr. Kellogg and the GC Committee was opened before the readers of the *Review*.⁴⁸

Meanwhile ministers were writing to the General Conference asking for advice concerning the promotion of *The Living Temple*. Daniells believed the teachings of the book to be "veiled heathenism," but continued to hold back from taking a firm position against the book, fearing that serious division would result.

Ellen White's views on the book inevitably became the issue. On several occasions she had the impression of being restrained by the Holy Spirit from making public the matters that had been presented to her. This restraint was now being interpreted by those siding with Dr. Kellogg as evidence that God would not allow her to be swayed by the leaders into speaking against the new teachings. In fact, Dr. David Paulson, a strong supporter of Kellogg, circulated a letter in which he proposed "to substantiate all the theories in *The Living Temple* by extracts from [Ellen White's] writings."⁴⁹

In the weeks just prior to the Autumn Council meetings, the general mood of the leading ministers was that

they had waited long enough. Eight days before the council, Daniells wrote to W. C. White: "In all these long months of anxiety I have not once attacked the book either through the press or on the platform. . . . It seems to me that silence will now cease to be a virtue. I believe that we should take this bull by the horns."⁵⁰

The first meeting of the council opened on the afternoon of October 7 and dealt chiefly with preliminaries. A large number of the delegates were still en route to the capital. Among those present, however, was Paulson. That evening he and Daniells had a lengthy conversation regarding their differences. Daniells shared their exchange with W. C. White in a letter written the next day. It captures the intensity and passion of the controversy:

I called Dr. Paulson's attention to our whole attitude regarding *The Living Temple*. I pointed out to him the attitude of the majority of the General Conference Committee and of our ministers generally toward the theological teaching of that book. I showed him that for years we had given that teaching careful study, and had lined up from the Atlantic to the Pacific against that teaching. We cannot accept it. We believe it is subversive of this whole movement; and yet we have never made an open attack upon the book. We have never written an article nor given a public address openly against *The Living Temple*. We have held back. I told him that there were 50 preachers burning to open fire on that teaching, which they believe to be positively dangerous; yet not one of them had written an article to my knowledge against the book.

Then I showed him that while we have been quiet, and have held back, he and others have taken it upon themselves to carry on the most high-handed, persistent, aggressive effort to not only place that book in the hands of our people, but to get our young people to read it, and to engage in its sale.

Then Daniells related how Paulson acknowledged that what he called the "Battle Creek idea" or the "new philosophy" was fundamentally different from, and antagonistic to, the old teachings of the third angel's message as developed by the pioneers.

Then I said: "The only possible basis of harmony and cooperation is for me either to be silent regarding the Battle Creek idea, allowing it to be spread broadcast throughout the denomination, and taught to all our young people, while holding my old views, or to surrender some of my views of the third angel's message." He assented to this position. . . .

From my long conversation with Dr. Paulson, every one of these points has been made clear, and my position has been confirmed. As surely as we live, the integrity of this movement under the third angel's message is on trial today in this controversy. The most stupendous and terrific blow that Satan has ever attempted to deal against this movement is now being

made. It is no personal scrimmage between a few men. The soundness of our positions is being questioned. The broad groundwork is being changed; the integrity of the Spirit of Prophecy is involved in it. In fact, as I view it, the survival of this whole movement is at stake. We dare not surrender a single inch of our ground. God will hold us accountable if we do this. We must reaffirm our positions; we must set forth the teaching of this message. We must not temporize with this evil thing that has raised its head against this last movement of God in the earth. I cannot do it and be true to my judgment and my convictions. . . .

Dr. Paulson acknowledged freely that it was a new movement, and that we ought not to be surprised if new light has come. He holds that there is a human element in the Testimonies and in the Bible itself, and that God dwelling in us gives us a knowledge and a teaching that makes us judges of both the Bible and the Testimonies of what is truth divine and what is human and fallible. This doctrine is to be repudiated. It is unsound and corrupt. You leaven our young people with that idea, and neither the Bible nor the Spirit of Prophecy will hold them. . . .

Language fails me when I try to set before you the terrible dangers that I see in our present controversy.⁵¹

From this letter, written at the commencement of the council, one can understand the hesitancy of Daniells to step out and "take this bull by the horns" without some "word from the Lord" regarding the correctness of the move.

Ellen White's Response

The meetings continued into their second week before a package arrived from Ellen White containing a series of letters emphatically condemning the teachings of *The Living Temple*. Her plain testimonies were read to the assembled delegates, who, for the first time, could no longer have any doubt as to where Ellen White stood in the controversy.

One communication read at the council contained these words speaking directly to the situation faced by Daniells:

After taking your position firmly, wisely, cautiously, make not one concession on any point concerning which God has plainly spoken. Be as calm as a summer evening, but as fixed as the everlasting hills. By conceding, you would be selling our whole cause into the hands of the enemy. The cause of God is not to be traded away. We must now take hold of these matters decidedly. I have many things to say that I have not wanted to say in the past, but now my mind is clear to speak and act.⁵²

After the reception of this testimony, Daniells took the time to send a brief letter to Ellen White regarding the timeliness of the messages received. He wrote, "It came at

just the right time exactly. The conflict was severe, and we knew not how things would turn. But your clear, clean-cut, beautiful message came and settled the controversy. I do not say that all parties came into perfect harmony, but it gave those who stood on the right side strength to stand, and hold their ground."⁵³

In response to this letter Ellen White related to Daniells how she had been prompted to send the testimonies to the council by the night vision of a vessel steering straight into a towering iceberg. "The passengers were violently shaken by the force of the collision," she wrote, "but no lives were lost. The vessel was injured, but not beyond repair. . . . Well I knew the meaning of this representation. I had my orders. I had heard the words, like a voice from our Captain, 'Meet it!' I knew what my duty was, and that there was not a moment to lose. The time for decided action had come."⁵⁴

Analysis

What was the catalyst for recognizing that the time had come for "decided action"? In spite of continuous pressure for months to state her views on the doctor's book, Ellen White had refrained from yielding to the demand. It had been her conviction that it was the responsibility of church leaders to settle the issue. She also continued to affirm her support for Kellogg, which she had publicly manifested two years earlier by accepting his invitation to stay in his home during the 1901 General Conference session.

Undoubtedly, only the Lord had an accurate reading of the church's spiritual temperature. And not until she had received orders from the Captain did Ellen White feel free "to speak and act" concerning issues she had not wished to confront. Yet from the contemporary accounts of those "on the scene," one can also grasp the fact that they felt a complete schism might be imminent. The "iceberg vision" providentially coincided with that turning point.

What made the circumstances of the Autumn Council especially significant was the growing public awareness of the controversy. It had spread from hallways and committee rooms to the pastorate and the readers of the *Review*. Kellogg had made it known to Daniells that "it was only a matter of a short time when our people would be called upon to choose sides."⁵⁵ Wrote Daniells: "We had come to the parting of the ways. Dr. Kellogg, Dr. Paulson, and some others were taking what seemed to us such a high-handed course that it seemed very clear that it was only a step to a complete split."⁵⁶ Neutrality was no longer a responsible option.

The crisis had arrived, and divine direction was given as to the church's future course. The next five years were no less traumatic for the church, as sides were taken as to the source of Ellen White's testimonies, and the battle continued over Adventist institutions in Battle Creek. Yet, as

depicted in Ellen White's vision, the vessel "rebounded from the contact, trembling from stem to stern, like a living creature. Then she moved forward on her way."⁵⁷

Summary Principle 3: The church cannot appear to condone by its silence or inaction theories that undermine its fundamentals. However, public confrontation should be determined by the level of public awareness of the issues.

Conclusion

Can the way Ellen White or our past leaders met movements of disaffected members determine what the church should do in meeting opposition today? The models presented in this study suggest that there is more than one right way for the church to respond.

A key to understanding Ellen White's instruction regarding the *Messenger* party was that the party leaders no longer professed sympathy with the church's mission. Their goal of destroying *Review* supporters made this clear. The Stanton and Kellogg supporters, however, saw their cause as constructively reforming; or, in Kellogg's case, greatly advancing the church's theological and organizational framework. Ellen White's writings were freely quoted as supporting their erroneous conclusions. Understandably, the response of leadership in the one case was different from what it was in the other.

When Ellen White saw certain of her statements being used to discredit the church or to prop up teachings out of harmony with the overall tenor of her writings, she moved quickly to condemn the falsehoods and to dissociate herself from such movements. She also urged church leaders to act decisively.

The Kellogg crisis makes clear that timing is an important factor in meeting opposition. There is a time to watch and wait. Until certain developments take place, leadership action might be misunderstood. But eventually, if rumor, misrepresentation, or heretical teachings go unchallenged, *not* acting is "selling our whole cause into the hands of the enemy."⁵⁸

Ellen White declared that there are times when positions must be taken "firmly, wisely," yet "cautiously."⁵⁹ Both in her own practice and in her writings she reminds of the need to strike resolutely against an errant message but not crush the erring messenger. The experience and testimony of W. F. Caldwell bears out the wisdom of such practice and counsel.

In summary, Ellen White recognizes a need for decisive action, while always keeping in mind Christ's statement "All ye are brethren" (Matt. 23:8). In the context of the Stanton-Caldwell movement, she wrote:

False teachers may appear to be very zealous for the work of God, and may expend means to bring their theories before the world and the church; but as they

mingle error with truth, their message is one of deception, and will lead souls into false paths. They are to be met and opposed, not because they are bad men, but because they are teachers of falsehood and are endeavoring to put upon falsehood the stamp of truth.⁶⁰

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- ²⁹ *Ibid.*
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- ⁴⁶ See, for example, R. W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, chapter 18, with his list of suggested reading (p. 297).
- ⁴⁷ E. G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 206.
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CHAPTER 5

THE EKKLESIA OF GOD— ITS NATURE, FUNCTION, AND AUTHORITY

The church must insist on sound doctrine. It is “the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15).¹ Truth cannot and must not be compromised. Truth and error cannot coexist. It is to be expected that we must “contend for the faith” (Jude 3). There is a place for vigorous apologetics. Statements of belief are good, professions of loyalty to the principle of *sola scriptura* and warnings against dangerous methods of interpretation are commendable, but they will never take the place of personal investigation, acquaintance with biblical truths. The times demand renewal in serious firsthand Bible study, getting into the actual text, searching the Scriptures. “Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night” (Joshua 1:8). There is compelling need for this kind of diligent scriptural search throughout Adventism, in pulpit, classroom, committee room, and pew. We must be more fully acquainted with the text, more familiar with the actual words of the Bible. This approach is more proactive than reactive. We must take the initiative and “grow up” a church that “will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of doctrine” (Eph. 4:14, 15).

The future of Adventism depends on this solid foundation. “Then you will be prosperous and successful” (Joshua 1:8). “For the leaders in Israel to extend a knowledge of the Scriptures in all their borders is to promote spiritual health; for God’s Word is a leaf from the tree of life.”² This is the eyesalve (the application of Scripture)³ that will give discernment to Laodicea as we face the challenges of today and tomorrow. The Word is still our safeguard.

It is timely to review the doctrine of the church and perhaps even to initiate and encourage full discussion on the subject as we did on other pressing theological questions in the seventies and eighties. Why the doctrine of the church, ecclesiology? Present circumstances, the kinds of challenges we are facing, would seem to call for this kind of study. Many of the ills that plague us stem from a defective ecclesiology, a misunderstanding of what the church is all about. There are times when the Spirit moves the agenda to certain items for emphasis. This could well be one of those times.

Part and Parcel

We are part of a salvific fellowship (those who are “being saved” [Acts 2:47])—in its local setting (our individual home church) and its universal dimension (the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church). As Ellen White has put it so often, we are inextricably bound up together. Expressed colloquially, we are “all in the same boat.” How then are we to understand what the church is all about? What are the dynamics at work? How does it all come together?

We need to know more about this organism, this body of Christ of which we are a part. We need to look at it from every possible point of view, as *anatomy* (bony structure, how it is organized) and as *physiology* (how it functions, the interrelationships of its parts and systems). Paul calls all of this “a profound mystery” (Eph. 5:32). But mystery in this sense is not conundrum or riddle; it is the deep secret of God revealed to those who are illuminated by His Spirit and has to do with matters vital to salvation.

The Nature of the Church

The New Testament church has its roots in the Old Testament *kehal Yahweh*, the community of God called together by God. Present here is the idea of being summoned, invited to join the assembly or congregation of God’s people. The thing to be remembered is that it is God Himself who does the calling. The people never call themselves. Yahweh reserves to Himself the initiative (Deut. 18:16; Judges 20:2). He has always been the God who calls out, gathers a people unto Himself, and makes covenant with them. “The Sovereign Lord declares—he who gathers the exiles of Israel: I will gather still others to them besides those already gathered” (Isa. 56:8). (See also Isa. 11:11, 12; Eze. 34:8-14.) Throughout Old Testament times He signals His intent in calling a man (Abraham) and his family, and then a nation (Israel). However, the plan and purpose of God could be fully disclosed only through the coming of Jesus. “His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in

Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:10, 11). The New Testament church is therefore successor to the Old Testament (*kehal Yahweh*) people of God. It is the new community of those who are called according to His purpose. Jesus announces its constitution, "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matt. 16:18). The initiative is still God's. He is always the convener.

He is Creator, Designer, Architect, Masterbuilder, Owner, and Operator. More than some impersonal "thing" or "it," the church is His bride, family, people, living temple, flock, blood purchase, chaste virgin. "Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers" (Heb. 2:11).

The Old Testament picture is that of a nobleman who finds an abandoned child and cares for her, professes undying love for her that ultimately triumphs over her waywardness and backslidings. "Yet I will remember the covenant I made with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you" (Eze. 16:60). (See also Deut. 32:10; Isa. 62:3; Zech. 2:8; 9:16; Mal. 3:17.)

We must accept the estimate that Christ places on His church and be careful not to discount the high regard He has for His chosen possession. It is not an aristocracy or meritocracy. It is not a club of the spiritual elite. As individuals the members of the church may seem to be a motley crew indeed, full of faults and failures, obviously defective in so many ways. But there is a reality beyond the narrow confines of human vision. It is not ours to judge.

The Formation of the Ekklesia

The doctrine of the church comes to full flower in the New Testament. The term is *ekklesia*. It occurs more than 100 times, most frequently in the letters of Paul (more than 60 instances) and in Acts (more than 20 times). If usage is any indication of importance, then it should be noted that there are 22 occurrences in 1 Corinthians.

Wayne A. Meeks traces the formation of the *ekklesia* (the fellowship) in his helpful book *The First Urban Christians*. There were, in the Greco-Roman world, a plethora of clubs and associations—in groups. "The early Roman Empire witnessed a luxuriant growth of clubs, guilds, and associations of all sorts. In the second century, Roman officials and literary opponents of Christianity often identified the Christian groups with such clubs."⁴ Was the Christian church simply another association? Can the church be explained and fully understood in sociological terms?

There is no doubt that the early churches served a social purpose and met social needs, but "crucial to the argument is Paul's view of the church as an eschatological

community, whose existence as God's future people absolutely determines its life in the present age."⁵ It is precisely this eschatological orientation that distinguishes the church from every other human organization—religious, social, or political. The early Christian communities did not see themselves as simply clubs or associations, but as agents of God to make His purposes known and accomplished. In this sense the church became and is an outpost of the kingdom of heaven, a colony where the will of God is already done.

It is amazing, but this "thin network of tiny Christian cells" came to look upon itself in audacious terms and images: God's "new humanity," His "earthly family," the "elect." They came to think of themselves as cross-cultural, interracial, and transnational. The Roman and Greek associations were usually homogeneous, but these communities were thoroughly heterogeneous, bringing together not only Jew, Gentile, and Greek, but slaves and masters, rich and poor; not a loose collection of clubs, but a worldwide fellowship of the one church (*oikoumene*).⁶ There are several key words taken from classical Greek as well as the Koine (commonly spoken first-century Greek) that the early church aggressively appropriated to their peculiar use, investing them with special theological meaning. One is *agape*, the word for Christian love. Another is the one we are considering, *ekklesia*. From the time of the Greek city-states *ekklesia* referred specifically to the assembly of free men called to an appointed place to decide on matters of state through the exercise of their vote. Various word studies are helpful, e.g., Barclay, Kittle, Vines, and Wuest. Better still is to trace the usage of the word in the actual text as the church develops and grows and is established in many places.

From earliest New Testament times *ekklesia* is used to refer to the local congregation (Acts 13:1; 16:5), to the believers in a certain city or province (Acts 9:31; 15:41), and to the worldwide fellowship (Eph. 2:19-22). No sharp line is drawn between the church in its local setting and the worldwide universal church. "For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink" (1 Cor. 12:13). What constitutes the church in heaven's view is a group of baptized believers who come together to worship in Christ's name, to partake of the emblems that proclaim His death, and to look forward to His second coming. *Ekklesia* can refer to the act of gathering or the people who are gathered. "For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them" (Matt. 18:20).

The local church is fully equipped by the Spirit and recognized as being capable of acting on behalf of the risen Lord. The local church is "port of entry" to the kingdom of God. It is here that those who come to belief in Christ are baptized, admitted to the community, and given the right

hand of fellowship. "Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day" (Acts 2:41; see also verse 47). We must be careful not to give the impression that the local church is in some way inferior to the church universal. The local church is the most palpable manifestation of the body of Christ on earth.

In the New Testament the local churches exercised important ecclesiastical functions: *They determined who should be members* (Matt. 18:17). In Corinth matters of discipline were carried out by the fellowship (1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 2). And the decisions stood. There was no review or reversal on the part of so-called higher bodies. *They selected their officers* (Acts 6:3-13; 14:23; Titus 1:5). The apostles were confident that each local fellowship was quite capable of not only appointing its officers but creating offices and structures to meet felt needs.

The apostle Paul's personal experience is highly instructive. "As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' 'Who are you, Lord?' Saul asked. 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. 'Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do'" (Acts 9:3-6). As the narrative unfolds, the brilliant young rabbi, who had already been chosen to represent Christ "before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel" (verse 15), goes into the city and is contacted by Ananias, a member of the local church. What is so highly instructive about the matter is the Lord sends the great apostle to the church to receive further instructions. Christ could have bypassed the little group of believers in this Gentile city and given direct instructions to Paul, or He could have guided him to the more prestigious Jerusalem congregation. What we have here is our Lord at the outset affirming the status of the local church.

So there is no need to contrive conflict between the church universal and the local church. The local church always represents the whole church. The integrity of the congregation must be maintained.

"Body" Language

The church is people "in Christ" and in fellowship with each other. The church is a place of relationships. It is a covenant community. It is an organism, a body. Paul's favorite ecclesiological symbol is that of a dynamic body capable of action, reaction, service, ministry. Its functionality is cause for wonder and awe—"fearfully and wonderfully made," to use David's language. "Just as each of us has one body with members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others" (Rom. 12:4, 5). "The body is a unit, though it is made up

of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12). There is unity here but not uniformity. The essential unity of the body transcends its diversity (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:12-31).⁷

The Power and the Problem

The church is a gifted community, charismatic in the best sense of the word. Every member has some *charisma* (gift). In Paul's view the gifts are not given for the private use and enjoyment of the gift bearer. "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good" (1 Cor. 12:7). The gifts of the Spirit were poured out in rich profusion on the members of the church at Corinth. Evidently these believers had forgotten the purpose of the gifts and the responsibility that they brought. They were enamored with the flashy, showy gifts. The Corinthian gatherings for worship became a showcase for individual talent. A spirit of rivalry and competition gained the ascendancy. "Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church" (1 Cor. 14:12). The gifts so graciously given by the Spirit for the blessing of the fellowship became a source of strife and contention. Confusion and division came in. "What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church" (verse 26).

The Roman church was given similar counsel and advice. "For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourselves with sober judgment. . . . Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited" (Rom. 12:3-16). Even the apostolic church had its human side! In every congregation there is always the danger, even the tendency, to the kind of spiritual pride, even arrogance, that leads to strife, divisions, heresies. The warning is for all time; each church, each individual Christian, must be on guard. The essential nature of the church is unity—of doctrine, goals, aims, objectives, in short, community. It is always characterized by mutuality, commonality, a single mission, moving in concert. Church is the place where people count, where each one is a "significant other." It is a place where members do things together: pray, study, serve, witness. "Each member belongs to all the others" (Rom. 12:5). And yet this is not lockstep uniformity. "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men" (1 Cor. 12:4-6).

Interpersonal relationships within a community of gifted people are subject to strain and stress. The gifts that are

given to energize and build up the church can become the problem. The apostolic injunction is "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought. . . . Honor one another above yourselves" (Rom. 12:3-10). Arrogance, certainly boasting, is out of place. None of us has anything that he or she did not receive. The gift/ability is *charis*—all of grace, as in the case of justification. The gifts are valid, heaven-endorsed only as they are used in the service of the fellowship.

This is true also in the matter of knowledge, *gnosis*. In a community that is saved by grace "through faith" ("it is the gift of God" [Eph. 2:8]), there is no room for "private interpretation," doing theology in a vacuum. All is shared, all belongs to the community. "When feasting upon God's Word, because of the precious light you gather therefrom, present it to others that they may feast with you. But let your communications be free and heartfelt."⁸ This will also help to test the validity and appropriateness of one's findings. Is it "light"? Does it build up the community?

Those who take this "high view" of the church will not tear the precious fabric of unity. They realize that the severest judgments are reserved for those who are insensitive to the things (actions and attitudes) that militate against unity. "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple" (1 Cor. 3:16, 17).

Function

The body paradigm helps us visualize the reality that is the church. This body is living, vital, dynamic, pulsating. It is not static, moribund, plastic. It grows, moves, progresses, goes from strength to strength. "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Eph. 4:11-16). "He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow" (Col. 2:19). This picture is worth ten thousand words. The body model truly says it all—unity, organization, adminis-

tration, ministry, relationships, authority, governance, discipline, how the system works.

The overarching consideration is unity—among the members, among the churches (1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 13:11; Eph. 4:4; Phil. 1:27; 1 Peter 3:8). As there is a legitimate communion of saints, so there is an actual community of churches. Each local congregation is "the church" manifest in "that place." But there is a solidarity demanded beyond one's own community. According to the body motif, all these parts are joined together, held by ligaments and sinews. But how is this unity achieved and maintained? "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (Eph. 4:3-6). The emphasis is on the work of the Holy Spirit. "For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13).

The ordinances of the church foster unity. Baptism is the greatest of all passage rites. The candidate is buried with Jesus and raised with Him to a new quality of life (Rom. 6:3-6; Col. 2:12). The Lord's Supper makes the congregation a meal fellowship. The table becomes the Lord's table. There is participation in and partaking of the emblems of His sacrifice (1 Cor. 11:23-29). It makes the community Second Coming-oriented. The foot-washing ceremony moves us to unselfish service of brother/sister. "Eucharistic participation in Christ, like baptismal incorporation into Christ, is no solitary matter: both involve sharing the common life in the body of Christ with all other believers, and carry with them serious ethical corollaries which Christians ignore at their peril."⁹ The appointed meetings of the group draw us closer to each other in genuine *koinonia*. "Let us not give up meeting together" (Heb. 10:25).

Emphasis is also on the faith, doctrine, and teaching. The members of the Jerusalem church "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching" (Acts 2:42). A mutual faith, a body of truths commonly held, is a powerful unifying force. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from every sin" (1 John 1:7).

The apostles never urged the members to become the church. They already are the body of Christ. The imperative arises out of the indicative. You are; therefore, you ought! Conduct, behavior, relationships with brothers and sisters, are determined by our status as being "in Christ." Our "citizenship" is already "in heaven" (Phil. 3:20). "But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven" (Heb.

12:22, 23). Therefore, thankfulness and humility before God is the only proper response.

The Place of Organization

The church, an edifying community, must also be an ordered community. "But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way" (1 Cor. 14:40). The rich profusion of gifts and charismatic experiences at Corinth made organization, gospel order, all the more imperative. Even redeemed humanity needs an organizing principle to give shape and form to the interdependent and spiritually related parts so that harmonious action is possible. The Greek word for order, *taxis* (from the verb *tasso*), was primarily a military term used to express the most precise and exact order as in drawing up in rank and file in battle array. This is the kind of order to be evident in the use of spiritual gifts and church governance. The structures must unite these units in ways that speak to the unity that is in Christ and witness to the universality of the church's mission. Without some organization, some imposition of order, the church cannot fulfill its mission and cannot be the sign of the kingdom of God in the world that it was intended to be.

There is a pattern in the book of Acts and the Epistles that is quite apparent. As the work grew, organization on a wider scale became necessary to enable the church to move forward unitedly. Even in New Testament times cooperative relations were entered into by the churches. Indications of this principle of cooperation between and among the churches may be found, for example, in Romans 15:26, 27, where Paul says that all the churches made contributions for the poor at Jerusalem. In various and sundry ways the churches attained commonality. Paul writes "to the churches of Galatia" (Gal. 1:2), a large Roman province. Peter writes "to God's elect, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia" (1 Peter 1:1), an even larger geographical area. James writes simply "to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations" (James 1:1), which included Christians everywhere. Although each local church had great authority, the apostles reminded the believers constantly that they did not stand alone as isolated units, but sustained relationships to all other churches and to what later came to be termed the church universal.

As the word spread and churches were multiplied, beginning at Jerusalem, then Judea and Samaria, and finally to the uttermost parts of the earth, unity of faith and action was to be maintained. There was to be not a loose agglomeration of churches scattered throughout the world, but the church manifest in many places. (Parachurch organizations are a blessing in many ways, but cannot qualify as churches.) The body of Christ was to be one, with many members transcending all barriers and lines of distinction.

The authority of the so-called higher bodies, structures,

infrastructures (conferences, unions, divisions, General Conference, departments, etc.) derives from the local congregations and are legitimated only by their relevance and service to the total fellowship. They must be thought of as a support system for the churches. They must come to view themselves as services.

From the very outset church leaders were oriented toward joint decisions, collaboration. There was common responsibility. Every baptized believer is to be included in the decision-making process through representative government. We see this principle at work in the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15). This is the primary passage on the way it should work. A classic case study par excellence!

The whole church was involved through the representatives whom they had sent to speak and act on their behalf (verses 2, 3, 6, 12, 22, 23, 25, 28). The exercise of authority was collegial and fraternal. It was in no way arbitrary. The apostles could say, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements" (verse 28). This is the way Matthew 18:18 operates. (See also Matt. 16:19; John 20:23.)

The apostles and elders acted on behalf of the fellowship. Authority operates best in the setting of representative church government, in which the appointed delegates and leaders of the church come together as equals, conferees, laborers together with God. The apostles did not exercise an arbitrary hegemony over the churches. The recommendations of the council were few. It seems as if the apostles consciously held them to a minimum.

The apostles continually held before the believers the Word of God as supreme authority and, indeed, the basis for their authority. As a result, there emerged in New Testament times what might be termed a pluriform church, rich and variegated. Some might wish to observe the ceremonial law and even practice circumcision. Others may not feel obligated to keep the law of Moses. But all recognized the necessity for obedience in faith. The apostles did not feel challenged by this variety in the church, because they were keenly aware that the Holy Spirit was the supreme administrator and that He dwelt in the church universal. There was no anxiety for exact uniformity, no tendency to micro-manage. But in the essentials there needed to be unity.

Modern bearers of authority must be closely associated with the risen Lord who gives them this *exousia* (authority) by which they work. They must know the things that make for unity. They must be clothed with His spirit, meekness, humility. They must counsel (good biblical principle) together, and the Holy Spirit is to form the consensus. Arbitrary use of power is out of place in His body.

Servant Leadership

"Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that

the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:25-28).

Paul’s use of the word *diakonia*, translated as ministry or service, informs our concept of leadership. Ministry—administration, office, religious and spiritual ministrations—is subsumed under this generic term. The word suggests lowly service, waiting at table. In Paul’s thinking, leadership is service.

At the same time, the apostle called upon the church to give proper respect and honor to those servants of God’s servants whom He had placed in their midst. “Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you” (1 Thess. 5:12). “The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching” (1 Tim. 5:17). “Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith” (Heb. 13:7).

The church is for ministry, and this ministry belongs to the whole people of God, not just a privileged few, the ordained, or those who hold office. Ministry, service, is the business of the entire church. The church’s Founder and Lord makes provision for this ministry, these tasks. “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Eph. 4:11, 12). The new vision is that those called to full-time ministry equip, enable, and encourage the members to carry out their individual ministries.

The church members are not an inferior class of saints. They *are* the church. *Laos* is the people of God. “You are all brothers” (Matt. 23:8). There are differences in function, but all have equal status before God. Anything that smacks of hierarchy is ruled out. In order to maintain this authority, which effectively holds the church together, church leaders must be men and women of prayer who are in constant communion with Christ through His Word. Office or institution cannot confer the power and authority that comes through the sanctified life. This authority is more intrinsic than extrinsic, more truth-based than imperial, more spiritual than physical, although it operates in all realms.

Challenges to Church Authority

There will always be challenges to church authority. It is inherent in the nature of things and to be expected. In

Old Testament times God dealt severely with those who spoke out against His appointed leaders, as when Miriam and Aaron challenged the leadership of Moses (Num. 12), or in the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Num. 16). Jesus warned: “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves” (Matt. 7:15).

Usually such challenges come from within the body. The apostle Paul saw this clearly and warned us: “I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard!” (Acts 20:29-31). This was the experience of early Adventism. The escalating attacks caused church leaders great concern. Ellen White gave her counsel. It is still relevant. “I saw that this door at which the enemy comes in to perplex and trouble the flock can be shut. I inquired of the angel how it could be closed. He said, ‘The church must flee to God’s Word and become established upon gospel order, which has been overlooked and neglected.’ This is indispensably necessary in order to bring the church into the unity of the faith.”¹⁰

The church already has an assignment, a job description, “Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction” (2 Tim. 4:2). “Now I commit you to God and the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

The faithful teaching and preaching of the Word, effective ministry, will build confidence in church leadership. Servants of God’s church should concentrate on the gospel. “Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17). We do not believe in apostolic succession in its classical form, but we do believe that God selects persons to minister to His church and that He vests them with authority. The people of God recognize this and affirm these servants and assist them as best they can in fulfilling their ministry.

“But if men in responsible positions will exercise the patience and kindness of Jesus, it will be more effective than authority or exhortation or strong arguments.”¹¹

Personality Profile

The church must recognize that most dissidents have a fundamental problem—they cannot submit to the discipline of the body. It is almost as if they have a fatal illness. The Pastoral letters draw a personality profile of the dissenters/schismatics. They have an unhealthy interest in genealogies, fables, meaningless talk; they are conceited, shallow thinkers. This is bound to result in “envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions, and constant friction” (1

Tim. 1:4, 5; 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 2:16, 17). The church cannot be naive, fuzzy, or softheaded in this respect. The church must be able to distinguish between a clear and present danger and a nuisance. Overreaction is as bad as underreaction. This is not a work for novices. (See 2 Tim. 2:22-26.) We must deal decisively with threats to unity: "Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him" (Titus 3:10). At the same time, we must appeal to those whose course of action would destroy unity, hoping all the while that they will change their course. At some point to continue the discussion becomes counterproductive and harmful to the body. "And who is equal to such a task?" (2 Cor. 2:16). In any case, discipline is to be remedial and never punitive. "'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord" (Rom. 12:19).

One further observation: there is a compulsion on the part of some to cleanse the camp, root out the tares, correct the leadership, steady the ark. We must be careful to grant everyone good faith. However, the scriptural case histories are there for our review and instruction. Above all, it is the unity of the body that must be maintained. Some will not be counseled. There will be casualties and defections and dropouts along the way. The church must realize that some persons have never really become a part of the fellowship. "They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us" (1 John 2:19). Humility is a much-needed virtue because there is in each of us a potential heretic or a potential inquisitor.

Adventism: Cult, Sect, or Authentic Church?

We must maintain historical perspective. The Seventh-day Adventist Church did not develop in a vacuum, nor did it spring into existence fully developed in every respect. It did not come together as a result of a protracted and extensive period of studies in ecclesiology!

The Great Second Advent Movement is a well-established fact of history. F. D. Nichol, L. E. Froom, and a host of younger scholars have seen to this. The preaching of Christ's imminent, personal, glorious, visible return produced an almost violent theological backlash. This view was counter to the popular teaching of a temporal millennium to be realized as Christianity conquered the nations and brought about the golden age. The early Adventists were possessed and driven by the apocalyptic vision. Sun black, moon blood, stars falling, global upheaval, sky ripped apart, Armageddon, white horse with Rider. The end of all things. Before we were anything, we were Adventists.

"There are two Latin words for future: *futurum* and *adventus*. *Futurum*, the future participle of *fuō*, the same root from which we get our word physics (*physis* in Greek

comes from *phyo*), is the future actualization of potentialities within things. *Adventus* is the appearance of something new that is not yet within things, not even as potentiality."¹²

"*Futurum* is what grows out of something that already exists, hidden away in it as an inner potentiality. An oak tree is the acorn's *futurum*. All that is needed for the future to be reached is more growth, development, maturation, actualization. If this model is applied by theology, then the kingdom of God is something that is reached at last by speeding up the world's becoming from within. The kingdom of God comes when the world comes of age. . . . *Adventus* is the arrival of someone or something new, which cannot be extrapolated out of history as such."¹³ The apocalyptic vision destroys the myth that humans can create Utopia through their own prowess and wisdom.

Sincere Christians who persisted in preaching this kind of message were in 1843-1844 finally evicted from the established churches. It was certainly not their intention to found a new denomination. The proliferation of denominations and religious "connections" was already the curse of New World Christendom. The Adventists preferred to remain a loose agglomeration of fellowships, waiting communities. The Disappointment changed everything. Their expanded view of the cleansing of the sanctuary and the introduction of the Sabbath truth gave cohesiveness to the group that embraced these understandings.

A series of Bible conferences developed a platform of "present" truth, a theological system. Now they had a banner, "the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (see Rev. 14:12).

It should be pointed out that early Seventh-day Adventists were mostly anti-organization. To form a new denomination was to return to Babylon, out of which they had just been cast. Unthinkable! But the die was cast. The differences between Seventh-day Adventists and their former communions were irreconcilable. They needed also to be distinguished from Adventists who had not accepted "present truth." Organization was inevitable.

Not an easy path to be sure, considering the fiercely independent and highly individualistic group of believers who came from every stripe of religious organization on the scene, but it came to be seen by all, except the most recalcitrant and obstreperous, that this was the only way.

Coming as they did from this eclectic milieu, Adventists have often been thought of as a sect or a cult. A sect is usually thought of as a protest group. It comes together on the basis of its disagreement with the main body, the previous connection. Cult in modern times has come to mean an organization built on some strong personality, a dominant founding figure.

But Adventists have always looked upon themselves as being in solidarity with historic Christianity, founded by

vigorous Bible study among the group of Advent believers. Contrary to common belief, Ellen White did not dominate these study sessions with truth revealed by divine revelation. Rather she indicates that at times her mind seemed to be held closed on a subject until it had come clear in Scripture. Only then did God provide confirmation through His messenger. She states:

Many of our people do not realize how firmly the foundation of our faith has been laid. My husband, Elder Joseph Bates, Father Pierce, Elder [Hiram] Edson, and others who were keen, noble, and true were among those who, after the passing of the time in 1844, searched for the truth as for hidden treasure. I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the Word. Again and again these brethren came together to study the Bible, in order that they might know its meaning, and be prepared to teach it with power. When they came to the point in their study where they said, "We can do nothing more," the Spirit of the Lord would come upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me, with instruction as to how we were to labor and teach effectively. Thus light was given that helped us to understand the scriptures in regard to Christ, His mission, and His priesthood. A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God was made plain to me, and I gave to others the instruction that the Lord had given me.

During this whole time I could not understand the reasoning of the brethren. My mind was locked, as it were, and I could not comprehend the meaning of the scriptures we were studying. This was one of the greatest sorrows of my life. I was in this condition of mind until all the principal points of our faith were made clear to our minds, in harmony with the Word of God. The brethren knew that when not in vision, I could not understand these matters, and they accepted as light direct from heaven the revelations given.

For two or three years my mind continued to be locked to an understanding of the Scriptures. In the course of our labors, my husband and I visited Father Andrews, who was suffering intensely with inflammatory rheumatism. We prayed for him. I laid my hands on his head, and said, "Father Andrews, the Lord Jesus maketh thee whole." He was healed instantly. He got up, and walked about the room, praising God, and saying, "I never saw it on this wise before. Angels of God are in this room." The glory of the Lord was revealed. Light seemed to shine all through the house, and an angel's hand was laid upon my head. From that time to this I have been able to understand the Word of God.¹⁴

P. Gerard Damsteegt points out that while Seventh-day Adventists saw themselves in a highly responsible (even

unique) position in the history of salvation, Ellen White cautioned them that they should highly appreciate the spiritual heritage received from the Christian church of history. "God's workers today constitute the connecting link between the former workers, the church of history, and the church that is to be called out from the world to meet their Lord. . . . All the excellencies that have come through the belief of the truth, from past ages to the present time, are to be treated with utmost respect."¹⁵

Seventh-day Adventists hold to the central core truths of Christian faith, e.g., God is one, yet manifest as three persons, Father, Son, Holy Spirit; the Son is of the same substance and nature as the Father (we believe in His pre-existence, His eternal power, and Godhead); the Holy Spirit is also coequal. We repudiated Arianism early in our history. It is not necessary to review a long list. Seventh-day Adventists do not preach another gospel.

It is important also to note that Seventh-day Adventists have no single towering founding person who led the group singlehanded out of its former communion into a new organization, as noted above. Seventh-day Adventist theology does not bear the imprimatur of any great individual spiritual leader. It has been more of a joint venture with heavy lay participation. This kind of Bible study could never pass for systematic theology in the great centers of religious studies. It is more like gathering the jewels of truth that have been scattered over the field of revelation and resetting them in the framework of the gospel.¹⁶

The point is that Seventh-day Adventists meet all the criteria of an authentic church. The idea of cult or sect does not apply. Seventh-day Adventists do not pass judgment on the validity of any Christian body. We accept Christians into our membership upon the profession of their faith when they have been baptized by immersion. We celebrate open Communion. No one is excluded from the Lord's table who believes in Jesus as Saviour and Lord. It is interesting to observe that Ellen White sees the Laodicean message as applicable to all Christians¹⁷ and refrains from labeling other Christians as having the mark of the beast. "No one has yet received the mark of the beast."¹⁸

The four classical marks of the church apply to Seventh-day Adventists: its *holiness* (in Jesus Christ), its *catholicity* (universality), its *apostolicity* (in harmony with the witness of the apostles/founders), and its *unity* (one Lord, one faith, one baptism). Ellen White's well-known comment on apostolic succession is illuminating at this point: "So the apostolic succession rests not upon the transmission of ecclesiastical authority, but upon spiritual relationship. A life actuated by the apostles' spirit, the belief and teaching of the truth they taught, this is the true evidence of apostolic succession. This is what constitutes men the successors of the first teachers of the gospel."¹⁹

Whatever the judgment of fellow Christians, Seventh-day Adventists are certain that before God their fellowship is an authentic expression of the body of Christ. Within the biblical parameters and guidelines it has authority to do business for God, and its decisions are to be regarded seriously.

The Future of the Eschatological Community

We have already pointed out that New Testament Christians are people who eagerly await their Lord's return (Titus 2:13, 14; 2 Peter 3:11, 12). It is Jesus Himself who makes His church an eschatological community. He infuses the believers' consciousness with apocalyptic pictures, sights, and sounds. "Jesus' proclamation was a totally eschatological proclamation."²⁰ Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 12 and 21 are His special words to the waiting servants. They must be kept ever fresh in mind. The servants who forget this instruction lapse into all kinds of bad conduct and misbehavior (Matt. 24:45-51). To lose this sense of awareness and urgency is not just an unfortunate circumstance. Our Lord regards it as a denial of trust, unbelief, calling for the severest of penalties—"He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites" (verse 51). This is a Person-centered awareness. We look for the Saviour, our Friend, the Bridegroom (all personal terms).

In the Epistle to the Ephesians the doctrine of the church is set forth in sweeping cosmic terms. She is witness to men and angels. She was chosen "before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight" (Eph. 1:4). She is used by God to bring about the consummation of all things, "to bring all things . . . together under one head, even Christ" (verse 10). "Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory" (verses 13, 14). The glorious future of His chosen people is secured by "incomparably great power," "which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him . . . in the heavenly realms" (verses 19, 20).

The church is on her way to meet the "Man" who promises and has secured her ultimate salvation. "Ephesians 4:13 speaks of a movement in which all saints participate. They are depicted as a people moving on a road to a certain goal. As yet the church lacks fulfillment: she is dependent on that to which she is to come. The Greek text is phrased so as to leave no doubt: one day the goal will be reached! The migrating people do not face an unknown future."²¹

The imagery of the bridal procession and the subsequent marriage ceremony is a familiar motif in Scripture. Closely associated with the marriage symbolism is the picture of an enthronement. (See Ps. 45.) The king is being

married to his people. Psalm 68 forms a background for Ephesians 4. The Perfect Man, Jesus, has promised to return for His chosen bride (Rev. 19). At His coming He grants her status (immortality). He has loved her and given "himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless" (Eph. 5:25, 26). In this He "will not falter or be discouraged" (Isa. 42:4). We have His assurance that the church militant will become the church triumphant.

NIV Bible Texts

"If I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).

"As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, because my flock lacks a shepherd and so has been plundered and has become food for all the wild animals, and because my shepherds did not search for my flock but cared for themselves rather than for my flock, therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them.

"For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land" (Eze. 34:8-14).

"His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:10, 11).

"And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matt. 16:18).

"For this is what the Lord Almighty says: 'After he has honored me and has sent me against the nations that have plundered you—for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye'" (Zech. 2:8).

"In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the

tetrarch) and Saul" (Acts 13:1).

"Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord" (Acts 9:31).

"He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches" (Acts 15:41).

"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit" (Eph. 2:19-22).

"For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them" (Matt. 18:20).

"Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day" (Acts 2:41).

"Praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47).

"If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector" (Matt. 18:17).

"It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present. When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

"Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5:1-8).

"For I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you. If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you, to some extent—not to put it too severely.

"The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. Now instead, you ought to forgive and

comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow" (2 Cor. 2:4-6).

"Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.

"This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

"So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

"Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people. Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia. These men began to argue with Stephen, but they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by which he spoke.

"Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, 'We have heard Stephen speak words of blasphemy against Moses and against God.'

"So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin.

"They produced false witnesses, who testified, 'This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law'" (Acts 6:3-13).

"Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust" (Acts 14:23).

"The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you" (Titus 1:5).

"As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?'

"'Who are you, Lord?' Saul asked.

"'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' he replied" (Acts 9:3-5).

"But the Lord said to Ananias, 'Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel'" (Acts 9:15).

"The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.

"For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one

body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

“Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,’ it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

“The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’ And the head cannot say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you!’ On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.

“Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts” (1 Cor. 12:12-31).

“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

“We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully” (Rom. 12:3-8).

“So the churches were strengthened in the faith and

grew daily in numbers” (Acts 16:5).

“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good” (1 Cor. 12:7).

“So it is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church” (1 Cor. 14:12).

“What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church” (1 Cor. 14:26).

“Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited” (Rom. 12:16).

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men” (1 Cor. 12:4-6).

“Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good” (Rom. 12:9).

“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.

“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” (Eph. 4:11-16).

“He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow” (Col. 2:19).

“I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought” (1 Cor. 1:10).

“Finally, brothers, good-by. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you” (2 Cor. 13:11).

“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called” (Eph. 4:4).

“Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel” (Phil. 1:27).

“Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another;

be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble" (1 Peter 3:8).

"Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

"If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin" (Rom. 6:3-6).

"Having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:12).

"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Heb. 10:25).

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42).

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

"But you have come close to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly.

"To the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect" (Heb. 12:22, 23).

"But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way" (1 Cor. 14:40).

"For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings" (Rom. 15:26, 27).

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia" (1 Peter 1:1).

"And all the brothers with me, to the churches in Galatia" (Gal. 1:2).

"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings" (James 1:1).

"I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 18:18).

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and

whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:19).

"If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven" (John 20:23).

"Then apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, two men who were leaders among the brothers. With them they sent the following letter:

"The apostles and elders, your brothers,

"To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia:

"Greetings.

"We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul—men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing.

"It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.

"Farewell.

"The men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. The people read it and were glad for the encouraging message" (Acts 15:22-31).

"Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other" (1 Thess. 5:12, 13).

"The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially whose work is preaching and teaching" (1 Tim. 5:17).

"Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith" (Heb. 13:7).

"But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers" (Matt. 23:8).

"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves" (Matt. 7:15).

"I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard!" (Acts 20:29-31).

"Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience

and careful instruction" (2 Tim. 4:2).

"Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

"Nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work—which is by faith.

"The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith" (1 Tim. 1:4, 5).

"If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain" (1 Tim. 6:3-6).

"Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly.

"Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus" (2 Tim. 2:16, 17).

"Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

"Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.

"Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will" (2 Tim. 2:22-26).

"Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him" (Titus 3:10).

"They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us" (1 John 2:19).

"Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time?

"It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.

"I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

"But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards.

"The master of that servant will come on a day when

he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of.

"He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 24:45-51).

"To be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ" (Eph. 1:10).

"I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will have nothing to do with us. So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us. Not satisfied with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church" (3 John 9, 10).

Spirit of Prophecy Quotes

1. "The organization of the church at Jerusalem was to serve as a model for the organization of churches in every other place where messengers of truth should win converts to the gospel" (Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 91).

2. "As an important factor in the spiritual growth of the new converts the apostles were careful to surround them with the safeguards of gospel order. Churches were duly organized in all places in Lycaonia and Pisidia where there were believers. Officers were appointed in each church, and proper order and system were established for the conduct of all the affairs pertaining to the spiritual welfare of the believers.

"This was in harmony with the gospel plan of uniting in one body all believers in Christ, and this plan Paul was careful to follow throughout his ministry. Those who in any place were by his labor led to accept Christ as the Saviour were at the proper time organized into a church. Even when the believers were but few in number, this was done. The Christians were thus taught to help one another, remembering the promise, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them' (Matt. 18:20)" (Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 185, 186).

3. "The marvelous light that illumined the darkness of Saul was the work of the Lord; but there was also a work that was to be done for him by the disciples. Christ had performed the work of revelation and conviction; and now the penitent was in a condition to learn from those whom God had ordained to teach His truth" (Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 121).

4. "The world's Redeemer has invested great power with His church. He states the rules to be applied in cases of trial with its members. After He has given explicit directions as to the course to be pursued, He says: 'Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever [in church discipline] ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' Thus even

the heavenly authority ratifies the discipline of the church in regard to its members when the Bible rule has been followed" (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 428).

5. "Paul sees his mistaken zeal and cries out: 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' Jesus did not then and there tell him, as He might have done, the work that He had assigned him. Paul must receive instruction in the Christian faith and move understandingly. Christ sends him to the very disciples whom he had been so bitterly persecuting, to learn of them. The light of heavenly illumination had taken away Paul's eyesight; but Jesus, the Great Healer of the blind, does not restore it. He answers the question of Paul in these words: 'Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.' Jesus could not only have healed Paul of his blindness, but He could have forgiven his sins and told him his duty by marking out his future course. From Christ all power and mercies were to flow; but He did not give Paul an experience, in his conversion to truth, independent of His church recently organized upon the earth" (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 429, 430).

6. "Those who are inclined to regard their individual judgment as supreme are in grave peril. It is Satan's studied effort to separate such ones from those who are channels of light, through whom God has wrought to build up and extend His work in the earth. To neglect or despise those whom God has appointed to bear the responsibilities of leadership in connection with the advancement of the truth is to reject the means that He has ordained for the help, encouragement, and strength of His people. For any worker in the Lord's cause to pass these by, and to think that his light must come through no other channel than directly from God, is to place himself in a position where he is liable to be deceived by the enemy and overthrown. The Lord in His wisdom has arranged that by means of the close relationship that should be maintained by all believers, Christian shall be united to Christian and church to church. Thus the human instrumentality will be enabled to cooperate with the divine. Every agency will be subordinate to the Holy Spirit, and all the believers will be united in an organized and well-directed effort to give to the world the glad tidings of the grace of God" (Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 164).

7. "You are constantly inclined to individual independence. You do not realize that independence is a poor thing when it leads you to have too much confidence in yourself and to trust to your own judgment rather than to respect the counsel and highly estimate the judgment of your brethren, especially of those in the offices which God has appointed for the saving of His people. God has invested His church with special authority and power which no one can be justified in disregarding and despis-

ing, for in so doing he despises the voice of God" (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 417).

8. "Contentions, strife, and lawsuits between brethren are a disgrace to the cause of truth. Those who take such a course expose the church to the ridicule of her enemies and cause the powers of darkness to triumph. They are piercing the wounds of Christ afresh and putting Him to an open shame. By ignoring the authority of the church they show contempt for God, who gave to the church its authority" (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 242, 243).

9. "'But,' say you, 'should I follow the judgment of the brethren independent of my own feelings?' I answer: The church is God's delegated authority upon earth. Christ has said: 'Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whosoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' There is altogether too little respect paid to the opinion of members of the same church. It is the want of deference for the opinions of the church that causes so much trouble among brethren. The eyes of the church may be able to discern in its individual members that which the erring may not see. A few persons may be as blind as the one in error, but the majority of the church is a power which should control its individual members. . . .

"Unless the advice and counsel of the church can be respected, it is indeed powerless. God has placed a voice in the church which must control its members" (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 107, 108).

10. "The consecrated messengers who in the early days of Christianity carried to a perishing world the glad tidings of salvation allowed no thought of self-exaltation to mar their presentation of Christ and Him crucified. They coveted neither authority nor preeminence" (Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 209).

11. "Notwithstanding the fact that Paul was personally taught by God, he had no strained ideas of individual responsibility. While looking to God for direct guidance, he was ever ready to recognize the authority vested in the body of believers united in church fellowship. He felt the need of counsel, and when matters of importance arose, he was glad to lay these before the church and to unite with his brethren in seeking God for wisdom to make right decisions. Even 'the spirits of the prophets,' he declared, 'are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints' (1 Cor. 14:32, 33). With Peter, he taught that all united in church capacity should be 'subject one to another' (1 Peter 5:5)" (Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 200).

12. "But the church of Christ is God's agency for the proclamation of truth; she is empowered by Him to do a special work; and if she is loyal to God, obedient to His commandments, there will dwell within her the excellency of divine power. If she will be true to her allegiance, there

is no power that can stand against her. The forces of the enemy will be no more able to overwhelm her than is the chaff to resist the whirlwind" (Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 259, 260).

13. "Because of earnest, faithful warnings to guard you against the mistakes of a lifetime, you have imagined you were a great benefit to the church. True, you are capable, in Jesus Christ, of being useful; but, notwithstanding this, the Lord and the church can get along without you. You can join the army of Christ's followers if you will; you may share in its conflicts and triumphs. But if you choose not to do this, the self-denying army under the bloodstained banner of the cross will move on to certain victory, and leave you behind. If you choose to guide your own frail bark across life's stormy waters you must answer for the presumption and be held responsible for the result" (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 126).

14. "Christ and His church are inseparable. To neglect or despise those whom God has appointed to lead out and to bear the responsibilities connected with His work and with the advancement and spread of the truth is to reject the means which God has ordained for the help, encouragement, and strength of His people. To pass these by and think your light must come through no other channel than directly from God places you in a position where you are liable to deception and to be overthrown" (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 418, 419).

15. "God is either teaching His church, reproofing their wrongs and strengthening their faith, or He is not. This work is of God, or it is not" (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 230).

16. "'Verily I say unto you,' Christ continued, 'whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven' (Matt. 18:18).

"This statement holds its force in all ages. On the church has been conferred the power to act in Christ's stead. It is God's instrumentality for the preservation of order and discipline among His people. To it the Lord has delegated the power to settle all questions respecting its prosperity, purity, and order. Upon it rests the responsibility of excluding from its fellowship those who are unworthy, who by their un-Christlike conduct would bring dishonor on the truth. Whatever the church does that is in accordance with the directions given in God's Word will be ratified in heaven" (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 263).

17. "No church officer should advise, no committee should recommend, nor should any church vote, that the name of a wrongdoer shall be removed from the church books, until the instruction given by Christ has been faithfully followed. When this instruction has been followed,

the church has cleared herself before God" (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 262).

18. "I am instructed to say to Seventh-day Adventists the world over, God has called us as a people to be a peculiar treasure unto Himself. He has appointed that His church on earth shall stand perfectly united in the Spirit and counsel of the Lord of hosts to the end of time" (Ellen G. White letter 54, 1908 [Jan. 21, 1908]).

19. "The church upon the earth is not perfect. The church militant is not the church triumphant. Earth is not heaven. The church is composed of erring men and women who will need patient, painstaking effort, that they may be educated, trained, and disciplined by precept and example, to do their work with acceptance here in this life, and to be crowned with glory and immortality in the future life" (Ellen G. White letter 3, 1888 [in *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, vol. 1, p. 249]).

20. "Very close and sacred is the relation between Christ and His church—He the bridegroom, and the church the bride; He the head, and the church the body. Connection with Christ, then, involves connection with His church" (Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 318).

21. "As our numbers increased, it was evident that without some form of organization there would be great confusion, and the work would not be carried forward successfully. To provide for the support of the ministry, for carrying the work in new fields, for protecting both the churches and the ministry from unworthy members, for holding church property, for the publication of the truth through the press, and for many other objects, organization was indispensable" (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 26).

22. "It would be surprising if there were not some, who, not being well-balanced in mind, have spoken and acted indiscreetly; for whenever and wherever the Lord works in giving a genuine blessing, a counterfeit is also revealed, in order to make of none effect the true work of God. Therefore we need to be exceedingly careful, and walk humbly before God, that we may have spiritual eyesalve that we may distinguish the working of the Holy Spirit of God from the working of that spirit that would bring in wild license and fanaticism. 'By their fruits ye shall know them' (Matt. 7:20). Those who are really beholding Christ will be changed into His image, even by the Spirit of the Lord, and will grow up to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit of God will inspire men with love and purity; and refinement will be manifest in their characters" (Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 142).

23. "There have been things written to me in regard to the movings of the Spirit of God at the last conference [1893], and at the college, which clearly indicate that because these blessings were not lived up to, minds have

been confused, and that which was light from heaven has been called excitement. I have been made sad to have this matter viewed in this light. We must be very careful not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in pronouncing the ministration of His Holy Spirit a species of fanaticism. How shall we understand the workings of the Spirit of God if it was not revealed in clear and unmistakable lines, not only in Battle Creek but in many places?

"I am not surprised that anyone should be confused at the after result. But in my experience of the past 49 years I have seen much of these things, and I have known that God was wrought in a marked manner; and let no one venture to say this is not the Spirit of God. It is just that which we are authorized to believe and pray for, for God is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him than parents are to give good gifts unto their children. But the Holy Spirit is not for the human agent to work; it is to work and use the human agent. That God did abundantly bless the students in the school and the church, I have not one doubt; but a period of great light and the outpouring of the Spirit is quite generally followed by a time of great darkness. Why? Because the enemy works with all his deceiving energies to make of none effect the deep movings of the Spirit of God on the human subject" (Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 130, 131).

24. "Throughout his ministry, Paul had looked to God for direct guidance. At the same time, he had been very careful to labor in harmony with the decisions of the general council at Jerusalem, and as a result the churches were 'established in the faith, and increased in number daily' (Acts 16:5). And now, notwithstanding the lack of sympathy shown him by some, he found comfort in the consciousness that he had done his duty in encouraging in his converts a spirit of loyalty, generosity, and brotherly love, as revealed on this occasion in the liberal contributions which he was enabled to place before the Jewish elders" (Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 402).

25. "There are in our churches those who profess the truth who are only hindrances to the work of reform. They are clogs to the wheels of the car of salvation. This class are frequently in trial. Doubts, jealousies, and suspicion are the fruits of selfishness, and seem to be interwoven with their very natures. I shall name this class chronic church grumblers. They do more in a church than two ministers can undo. They are a tax to the church and a great weight to the ministers of Christ. They live in an atmosphere of doubts, jealousies, and surmisings. Much time and labor of the ambassadors of Christ are required to undo their work of evil, and restore harmony and union in the church. This takes from the courage and strength of God's servants and unfits them for the work He has for them to do in saving perishing souls from ruin. God will reward these troublers of Zion according to their works.

"The ministers of Christ should take their position, and not be hindered in their work by these agents of Satan. There will be enough of these to question, and quibble, and criticize, to keep the ministers of God constantly busy, if they will allow themselves to be detained from the great work of giving the last saving message of warning to the world. If the church has no strength to stand against the unsanctified, rebellious feelings of church grumblers, it is better to let church and grumblers go overboard together than lose the opportunity of saving hundreds who would make better churches, and have the elements existing within themselves of strength and union and power.

"The very best way for ministers and churches is to let this faultfinding, crooked class fall back into their own element, and pull away from the shore, launch out into the deep, and cast out the gospel net again for fish that may pay for the labor bestowed upon them. Satan exults when men and women embrace the truth who are naturally faultfinding and who will throw all the darkness and hindrance they can against the advancement of the work of God. Ministers cannot now in this important period of the work be detained to prop up men and women who see and have felt once the force of the truth. They should fasten believing Christians on Christ, who is able to hold them up and preserve them blameless unto His appearing, while they go forth to new fields of labor" (Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, pp. 370-372).

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- ³ *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 965.
- ⁴ Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 77.
- ⁵ Gordon Fee, *New International Commentary on the New Testament: Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987), p. 230.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 77f.
- ⁷ The New Testament images of the church are so rich and varied. One respected scholar sees more than 100! However, this paper makes the "body" symbolism the major motif. The choice is dictated by space considerations.
- ⁸ E. G. White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 87.
- ⁹ F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), p. 285.
- ¹⁰ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1945), p. 100.
- ¹¹ Ellen G. White letter 3, 1888 (in *Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, vol. 1, p. 250).
- ¹² Carl Braaten, *Christ and Counter-Christ* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), p. 11.
- ¹³ ———, *The Future of God* (New York: Macmillan, 1969), pp. 29, 30.
- ¹⁴ E. G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 206, 207.
- ¹⁵ Ellen G. White manuscript 1, 1874 (in *Special Testimonies*, Series A, No. 7, p. 11). Quoted in Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), p. 259.
- ¹⁶ See E. G. White, *Gospel Workers*, p. 289; *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1923), p. 188.
- ¹⁷ ———, *Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 77, 78.
- ¹⁸ ———, *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1946), p. 234.
- ¹⁹ ———, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 467.
- ²⁰ Hans Schwarz, *On the Way to the Future* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1972), p. 55.
- ²¹ From *Ephesians 4-6 (Anchor Bible)*, translation and commentary by Markus Barth, p. 485. Copyright © 1974 by Doubleday & Company, Inc.

CONCLUSION

Obviously the church has invested considerable time and means to produce this book. Why has it bothered? Couldn't the investment have been better directed toward its mission to the lost world? Those are questions that denominational leadership has pondered carefully. The serious implications of these questions has led leadership to wait for many months before deciding to produce this "defense." But in the end, painful as it is to be diverted from its Christ-ordained mission, the church has felt forced to act.

At stake is the integrity of the church itself. God could have sent the angels of heaven to proclaim the message of salvation, or He could have written it across the sky, but, in His infinite wisdom He chose to use the church to communicate His eternal plan to humankind. Ellen White explained:

The church is the depository of the wealth of the riches of the grace of Christ, and through the church eventually will be made manifest the final and full display of the love of God to the world that is to be lightened with its glory.¹

Since the church has fallible human beings as both leaders and members, it falls far short of perfection. But in spite of the church's faults, God loves it and continues to work through it to carry out His gracious plans for human beings. "The church, enfeebled and defective, needing to be reproved, warned, and counseled, is the only object upon earth upon which Christ bestows His supreme regard."²

The disaffected promoters of private ministries who have been described in this book threaten the foundations and thus the mission of the church. They may believe that their work is to call the church to a higher standard that will make it possible for God to pour out the Holy Spirit in greater abundance for a finished work. And certainly the church is in continual need of revival and reformation. But they have gone about their task in such a way that the effect of their "ministry" is to divide and weaken the church rather than to empower it.

The problem is that these dissidents have chosen to work in opposition to the elected leadership rather than in cooperation with it. Ellen White met a similar challenge in the 1870s:

Christ and His church are inseparable. To neglect or

despise those whom God has appointed to lead out and to bear the responsibilities connected with His work and with the advancement and spread of the truth is to reject the means which God has ordained for the help, encouragement, and strength of His people. To pass these by and think your light must come through no other channel than directly from God places you in a position where you are liable to deception and to be overthrown.³

The dissidents divide the church when they insist that their interpretation of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy are the only authentic ones. They set up their own version of "historic Adventism." They undermine confidence in the church when they accuse ministers and leaders who do not agree with them of "apostasy." They threaten the viability of the church when they encourage members to divert financial resources from the organized work to their private treasuries. Thus they sow seeds of disunity. While each Adventist must consult his or her conscience in deciding what to do about their message, the church has produced this book that all might see the facts in their true light and have an adequate basis for making their decisions. (See Appendix XLVI.)

In this work detailed information has been shared on the problems the church has been having with Hope International, Hartland Institute, Steps to Life, and Prophecy Countdown. They present the most immediate challenge. But the principles stated herein are applicable on a much wider scale. The Adventist Church has had its detractors throughout its history, and it is likely to encounter these challenges until the Lord comes. Hopefully the reader can use this material to understand and respond to any "reform" group that seeks to work by undermining leaders and dividing members.

In the introduction it was noted that this book has been prepared in a spirit of love and concern—not hostility or revenge. An appeal was addressed to the disaffected private ministries. It seems fitting to end on a note of appeal.

Dear Separated Brothers and Sisters:

Don't fight us. In the long run we all want the same thing—the finishing of the gospel proclamation, the return of Jesus, and a glorious eternity together with Him and each other. Preach and publish your call to a higher standard of holiness. Explain your particular theological understandings in those areas where the church has no definitive position. But allow other, equally sincere members to have

their views also and still be counted your brothers and sisters in Christ. In other words, be tolerant on those points that the church has left open. Never seek to destroy confidence in our ministry or leadership, for that could cause "weaker" members to lose faith altogether and turn away from God's church. If you see wrongs in individuals, follow Christ's counsel in Matthew 18, but never publish the matter abroad. And never encourage members to bypass

God's treasury and send their tithes to you, for this is not God's plan. Let's work together—in unity, but not in uniformity—to finish our mission. We love you.

Your Church

REFERENCES

- ¹ E. G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 50.
- ² *Ibid.*, p. 49.
- ³ ———, *Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 418, 419.

APPENDIX I

PERTH DECLARATION

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

PERTH DECLARATION

We representatives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church assembled in Annual Council believe that momentous social, economic, and religious developments now occurring signal the approaching fulfillment of events described by the Bible prophecies of the end-time. Being involved in the final struggle between Christ and Satan that we call the great controversy, we find the enemy of truth exercising every agency to subvert and keep the Church in a Laodicean condition. During this council we sense a special moving of the Holy Spirit that leads us to acknowledge our need for His outpouring of power to complete God's work on earth.

We reaffirm confidence in Christ our righteous Redeemer and in the fundamental truths that bind us together as a people. Among these are belief in Christ, the Lord of creation, in His mighty acts as recorded in Genesis 1 and 2, and in His atoning death at Calvary that made possible our salvation and final restoration in eternal life. We rejoice in full assurance of our salvation as a gift from God, and in victory over temptation and sin by His overcoming power. We accept the Scriptures as our teacher and final authority, and respond to His limitless love in grateful obedience. We affirm as well our confidence in His leading through the Spirit of Prophecy.

We believe the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be a prophetic movement more than an institution, the remnant people called of God to bear a unique message to earth's last generations, to announce the imminent return of Christ in power and glory. Being firmly convinced we live in the hour of His judgment, we are dedicated to the task of unitedly carrying Christ's final invitation to every inhabitant of the earth.

We note with regret that there are some among us who wish to participate in and be thought of as contributing to the Adventist work, while at the same time denying or ignoring fundamental components of our message and work. Their influence weakens efforts to build faith and unity. Others exercise a separatist spirit to present themselves as defenders of the authentic Adventist faith, the correctors of others, often elevating to importance issues not agreed upon by the body as vital. Still others advance speculative prophetic interpretations or organize meetings without consultation and in competition with those of the Church. Many circulate private publications and electronic media presentations among the believers in a manner to suggest they represent the authentic teachings of the body as a whole. Whatever the original intent, such activities are producing distrust and division that hinder the work of God.

We appeal to those who promote private programs to set aside divisive side issues and join with the organized Church in affirming the fundamentals of our message. In unity we can rededicate ourselves, our abilities, and our efforts in cooperative service to

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ed, pressing forward the work in the brief time that remains. We include in this appeal a call for personal spiritual renewal, for prayer, worship, Bible study, and committed lives. This means renewed preaching and teaching of the core truths with their timeless message of hope, and outreach in personal witness to those about us.

We call for a new commitment on the part of all members and every worker in the Adventist movement. We include writers and editors of our publications, pastors, administrators, boards, leaders, and staff members of our institutions, whether educational, health-care, or other, lay leaders and members of all our congregations—in short, every believer in the three angels' messages. We acknowledge that in the past we have not done all we could, but in the conviction that earth's time is short and much remains to be accomplished, a new dedication is imperative. Despite her weaknesses, we believe the church remains God's special agency on earth.

We challenge all leaders, especially our pastors as the primary spiritual leaders of our people, to lift high the fundamental truths of our message from the pages of the Scriptures. In pulpit discourses, in personal instruction, in ministers' meetings as guided by the Ministerial Association and administrators in every field, in presentations for the public, we must present Jesus in the setting of present truth as the answer to every human need. We must lay aside all traces of cynicism, self-advancement, party spirit, and distrust to unite as one people carrying the everlasting gospel to all the world.

We commit ourselves to this great purpose, praying that the Holy Spirit will use us as one dedicated people, together at work in preparation for Christ's return.

October 14, 1991

APPENDIX II

NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION SUPPORTING MINISTRIES GUIDELINES

NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

SUPPORTING MINISTRIES GUIDELINES

1. The leaders of supporting ministries shall be members in good and regular standing of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
2. The theological positions of the supporting ministries shall be in harmony with the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In supporting these beliefs, the context of both the biblical text and writings of Ellen G White will be faithfully used.
3. The leaders of supporting ministries shall support and cooperate with the goals and purposes of the Seventh-day Adventist Church by words, actions, and publications. Their work shall positively supplement that of the church in carrying out the gospel commission.
4. Supporting ministry leaders, ordained or unordained, shall not represent their supporting ministry as an official church project.
5. Supporting ministries shall not accept tithe from SDA church members and shall encourage their supporters to be faithful in returning tithe and appropriate offerings through the authorized channels of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
6. Supporting ministries shall make available a formal statement of mission, including plans and objectives.
7. Supporting ministries, which accept contributions, shall be registered with the appropriate tax bodies as nonprofit organizations and shall provide copies of their annual audited financial statements upon the request of the North American Division.
8. Requests for official church business travel for supporting ministries personnel holding denominational licenses or credentials shall be processed in harmony with the provisions of *NAD Working Policy* C 10 30(3), and C 15 10(1). Failure to comply with this policy may jeopardize the continuation of the status of such denominational employees.
9. All interdivision travel by lay persons from the North American Division on official church business shall be processed in harmony with the provisions of *NAD Working Policy* C 15 10 (see *NAD Working Policy* C 10 30[3]).

APPENDIX III

**“INDEPENDENT MINISTRIES”
ARTICLES REPRINTED FROM THE *ADVENTIST REVIEW*
DECEMBER 7, 14, 21, and 28, 1989**

AN IMPORTANT SERIES

Joe Engelkemier's "Independent Ministries: Should We Support Them?" on page 10 of this issue starts an important series. His articles that will run throughout this month will answer many of the questions we hear Adventists asking.

How does the *Review* regard independent ministries and their publications?

First, we strongly support the concept behind them, as well as most of them individually. We have reservations about a small number, for reasons we will mention below.

Independent ministries have been a great strength to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Over the years they have unleashed additional energies, creativity, and funds for the mission of the church. Ellen White gave them her blessing, personally supporting the Madison school in Tennessee.

And look at their contribution to the church's mission today! Adventists of all ages are volunteering time and skills to build churches and schools through ministries like Maranatha Volunteers International and Mission Church Builders. Others are running vegetarian restaurants, like the Country Life chain in the largest cities of the world. Still others are involved in educational, healing, and printing ministries.

Most independent ministries are members of the Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries. Their annual convention throbs with enthusiasm, ideas, energy—and nonstop talk. These are Adventist entrepreneurs who love the Lord and His people and who come together to share and learn about witnessing in the marketplace.

Second, we stand for a free church press. We do not agree with everything we read in the publications of independent ministries, but we support their right to go into print.

Today one can find a staggering array of unofficial Adventist publications. They range from the radical

right to the radical left. Alongside some, the *Review* looks flamingly liberal; alongside others, we look like bluenosed conservatives.

The proliferation of Adventist magazines and newsletters parallels the scene in Western society, where a host of specialized publications appeals to special interest groups. But the *Review* seeks to swim against the current: we are the paper for the *whole* church, and refuse to become the voice or vehicle for any one element in the church.

Reservations

However, we cannot give our blessing to every independent ministry or its publication. When we find any of the following elements present, we think that ministry is out of line and does not deserve the support of members:

■ When it solicits or accepts tithe.

In our view such a course weakens the body. No matter what arguments may be brought to bear in support of the practice, including Ellen White's example, we think that the biblical principles of tithing and the unity of the church, supported by specific counsel from Ellen White herself, rule it out of court.

■ When it is critical of the church, its leaders, and its ministers.

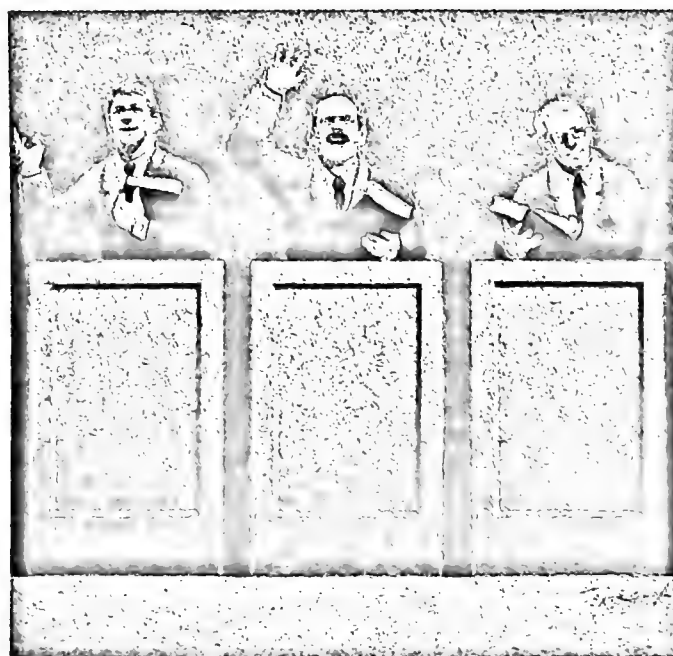
The church isn't perfect, and its leaders may make mistakes. But the Lord is head of the church, not humans, and we are to look always to Him. The church is safe in His hands. He uses weak, erring humans, just as He always has, to keep His work moving forward.

■ When it polarizes rather than builds up.

A few independent ministries seek to win favor and funds by putting themselves forward as the remnant of the true or "historic" Adventist Church. They alone preserve the truth; they alone give the message for this time. By inference or by explicit statement they alone can be trusted and deserve financial backing.

We say: Beware of this attitude, wherever it may be found or whatever form it may take. God hasn't raised up one man here or a little group there and given to them alone the truth for today. Yes, we must always be open, receptive to new light; and yes, we *do* need revival and reformation. But the Lord is leading out a *people*, not an offshoot; a church, not a few here and there. The vision of Revelation 7 and 14 is of a vast multitude—so great that no one can number it.

The 1988 North American Division year-end meetings voted guidelines for acceptable independent ministries. The list includes our three points above plus a number of others: the standing of leaders, theological positions, cooperative actions, use of ministerial ordination, outward in mission rather than inward, statement of mission, use of Ellen White quotations, audited financial statements,



INDEPENDENT MINISTRIES ARTICLES

REPRINTED FROM THE
ADVENTIST REVIEW
DECEMBER 7, 14, 21, AND 28, 1989

BY JOE ENGELKEMIER

and composition of boards (see Mar. 2, 1989, *Adventist Review*).

We urge every Adventist: read Elder Engelkemier's four articles during this month. Read them carefully. Read them prayerfully. Test them by the inspired writings.

They won't give you an index of proscribed ministries or publications. But they will give you a basis for examination so you can check out any outfit that comes along.

WILLIAM G. JOHNSON

SHOULD WE

SUPPORT THEM?

How many requests for funds do you get in a year from independent church-related ministries? On what basis do you decide which ones to support?

During the 1980s independent ministries have proliferated—mainly in North America, but also overseas. Some of these ministries print magazines or newsletters. And many ask for financial support.

Our purpose in this article is two-fold: (1) to note the Bible precedent for self-supporting and/or independent ministries, and (2) to suggest some questions to ask when you receive an appeal for funds from independent ministry groups.

Ministries that are truly self-supporting do not send out appeals for funds. Many of these are under the umbrella of the Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries (ASI)—an organization that began in 1947 as the Association of Self-supporting Institutions. At that time ASI was made up of a small number of health-care and educational ministries. Today it consists of more than 600 entities in North America alone—restaurants, food factories, architects, travel agents, farmers, attorneys, printers, schools, and orphanages.

ASI operates under a constitution with regular or associate membership that is open to any faithful member not church employed. A key reason for banding together has been to learn how to witness more effectively. "Sharing Christ in the Marketplace" dominates conventions, which meet on a regional or national basis. If you

ever go to an ASI convention, you will leave with a new vision of what can be done by dedicated laypeople.

Organizations such as ASI greatly strengthen the outreach of the church. They are like Aquila and Priscilla, the tentmakers at Corinth who befriended Paul and gave him work, and who later traveled with him to Ephesus. There they had opportunity to give Bible studies to Apollos, who in turn became a strong witness for Christ (Acts 18:1-3, 18-27). They incorporated witnessing right into their business and even found time to travel for the Lord.

Christ's "Go and make disciples" command (Matt. 28:19, 20)* takes in all believers. Pastors alone can never reach more than a tiny fraction of even the unchurched people of the world—a group that in the United States alone exceeds 100 million people. Ellen White puts the challenge like this: "The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work, and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers" (*Gospel Workers*, p. 352).

Apparently some of the prophets supported themselves during their ministries. Daniel's paycheck, for example, must have come from the government for which he worked, first in Babylon, then in Medo-Persia.

At various times during his ministry Paul worked with his own hands to provide for his necessities (1 Cor. 4:12). At Corinth he did some tent-making (Acts 18:1-3). At Thessalonica he "worked night and day" so as to not be a burden to that congregation (2 Thess. 3:7-9). Ellen White's *Acts of the Apostles* has an entire chapter about Paul as a self-supporting worker (pp. 346-358).

One time the disciples met a man who had been driving out demons in Christ's name. "We tried to stop him," they told Jesus, "because he is not one of us." Jesus replied: "Do not stop him, for whoever is not against you is for you" (Luke 9:49, 50).

During the later years of her life Ellen White encouraged Ed Sutherland and Percy Magan to start Madison College—a self-supporting school that spawned many other such schools, especially in the southern United States. These ministries did much to hasten the growth of Adventism in that region. Madison also pro-

duced many strong denominational leaders.

Over the past 20 years I have had opportunity to get acquainted with more than a dozen independent ministries. Almost half of some 15 Weeks of Prayer that I have conducted have been at self-supporting schools, such as Little Creek and Laurelbrook. I also served for several years on the board of an independent college. I have admired the self-sacrifice and devotion that I have found at these schools.

Difficulties and Dangers

Some Adventists have formed independent ministries that are not under the umbrella of ASI. An increasing number of these seek funds from church members.

Independent ministries sometimes attract a few folk who are critical of the church and its leaders. Another danger is the ever-present human tendency to become too independent. About 1893 a certain Brother S apparently looked at the weaknesses in church members and leaders, and convinced himself that God had given him a message to take people out of the church and into his group.

Ellen White wrote extensively about this group (see "The Remnant Church Not Babylon" in *Testimonies to Ministers*). She mentions that he and his followers had printed pamphlets that "were scattered abroad everywhere" (p. 23).

"Without my consent," she said, "they have made selections from the Testimonies, and have inserted them in the pamphlet they have published, to make it appear that my writings sustain and approve the position they advocate" (*ibid.*, p. 32). She added: "In times past many others have done this same thing, and have made it appear that the Testimonies sustained positions that were untenable and false" (*ibid.*, p. 33).

Similar unbalanced use of the writings of Ellen White has been carried out again and again, and will no doubt continue.

Deciding About Fund Appeals

How then should you decide whether or not to contribute funds to an independent ministry?

Let's return to the man whom the disciples tried to stop. When Jesus said "Do not stop him," He added this test: "Whoever is not against you is for you." This "for you" suggests support

for the body of Christ backed by loyalty to its chosen leaders. Would Brother S have passed this test? Would the men who rebelled against Moses—Korah, Dathan, and Abiram—have passed it?

Jesus climaxed His warnings in Matthew 7:15-20 about false religionists with this related test: "By their fruit you will recognize them" (verse 20).

We evaluate pastors by their fruit. We test administrators, employees, and teachers the same way. Should we not do the same with appeals for funds?

Here are a few questions you should ask:

■ **Does the ministry win people to Christ? Through the years, has it produced loyal Seventh-day Adventists?**

About 10 years ago a church administrator suggested this test: "If an independent ministry actively works to bring people into the organized Seventh-day Adventist Church, that ministry is safe to support. If not, watch out—particularly if it draws followers to itself rather than to the church."

The Voice of Prophecy began as an independent ministry, as did other media programs. I, both my brothers, and my sister all became Seventh-day Adventists through the Voice of Prophecy. As children growing up on an Oklahoma farm, we had never heard of Seventh-day Adventists. But through the Voice of Prophecy's correspondence course, all four of us were eventually baptized into this church. No one needs to convince us of the Voice of Prophecy's fruitfulness.

In my limited teaching experience at Andrews University, I have encountered student after student who came into the church through It Is Written and other media ministries. I need no convincing that these organizations deserve whatever financial support we can give.

■ **What is the spirit of the ministry?**

Do you find the compassion of Christ in the ministry and in its publications and letters? Does it have a redemptive attitude toward people who fall into sin? Does it demonstrate loyalty to church leadership?

■ **Does the ministry cooperate with denominational leaders in the conference and union in which it operates?**

This relates to the "Whoever is not against you is for you" test drawn from

Christ's words in Luke 9:50.

Ellen White noted that "there have ever been individuals of independent minds who have claimed that they were right, that God had especially taught, impressed, and led them. . . . These draw away from the body, and each one is a separate church of himself" (*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 428, 429).

Is it possible that men of a similar temperament will arise and, while professing loyalty to the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, actually work to become the above-mentioned "separate church"? Could they convince themselves that the denomination is being rejected by God and that they are called to lead a faithful few into Canaan?

■ **Does the Bible get priority in the publications of the ministry?**

If the ministry sends out letters or publishes a journal, check its material on this point. I have received letters and seen articles and editorials in journals in which Ellen White gets quoted 5 to 10 times more frequently than the Bible. Note what she said about this tendency:

"The Testimonies are not to take the place of the Word. . . . Let all prove their positions from the Scriptures and substantiate every point they claim as truth from the revealed Word of God" (*Evangelism*, p. 256).

The preceding was directed to those making public presentations. But even in publications primarily for Seventh-day Adventists, shouldn't the Bible get first priority? We can draw good insights and many practical applications from the writings of Ellen White, but shouldn't every message or editorial be built solidly on the Bible?

■ **Does the ministry have a record of financial openness and integrity?**

Are the books of the ministry open to audit by someone from the conference office or from an outside firm? Could you, if you chose, ask for and get a financial statement that shows the sources and disbursement of the funds that it handles?

■ **Does the ministry strengthen the spirit of unity within the church?**

The leaders at one of the independent colleges in the United States tell people, "We want to be known because of what we are for, not by what we are against."

Paul wrote most earnestly about the need for unity. He urged that "there should be no division in the body" (1

Cor. 12:25). Almost all of 1 Corinthians 12 and the first half of Ephesians 4 are about unity in the body of Christ.

"Press together! Press together! Press together!" Again and again this message came to the church through Ellen White. In the context of one such statement, she said: "God wants His people to counsel together, to be a united church, in Christ a perfect whole. . . . No one company is to form a confederacy, and say, 'We are going to take this work, and carry it on in our own way'" (*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 374). □

SHOULD THEY

RECEIVE TITHE?

Should an independent ministry solicit or accept tithe? Should a church member send tithe to an independent ministry?

Except for the equivalent of about eight weeks salary, I have not been on the payroll of a conference or denominational institution since 1984. Suppose I were to begin a small ministry in which I train young people in door-to-door visitation. (I love knocking on doors to meet new people.) Let's imagine that I give full time to my new ministry—with no income.

A friend who is interested in that kind of ministry sends me his tithe. Should I accept it, or return it with the suggestion that he give it to his church? Does the Bible say anything that could help me make the right decision?

The Biblical "Storehouse"

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse," the Bible instructs (Mal. 3:10).^{*} But what is the "storehouse"?

In 1 Chronicles 26:20 we read: "Their fellow Levites were in charge of the treasuries of the house of God and the treasuries for the dedicated things." The "treasuries" were located at "the house of God," with Levites in charge. "But you are to seek the place the Lord your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his Name there for his dwelling. To that place you must go; there bring your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts" (Deut. 12:5, 6). God tells His people to bring their sacrifices and their "tithes and special gifts" to "the place the Lord your God

will choose as a dwelling for his Name" (verse 11)—an obvious reference to the sanctuary. After the building of Solomon's Temple, that "place" was the Temple (see 1 Kings 8:29).

Some people lived too far to take animals or grain to the sanctuary. God told these people: "Exchange your tithe for silver, and take the silver with you and go to the place the Lord your God will choose" (Deut. 14:25). These repeated references to "the place" God would choose show that the "storehouse" of Malachi 3:8-10 was first at the tabernacle and then at the Temple.

The New Testament contains no explicit command to tithe, nor does it identify a storehouse. Shall we therefore abolish tithing? Or if we tithe, may every person do "that which [is] right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6, KJV) and decide where to take God's tithe?

Abraham paid tithe centuries before the formulation of the Levitical code—thus tithing could not have been abolished with that code at the cross. "Our Lord's admonition in Matthew 23:23 constitutes tacit approval, though not an explicit command, for tithe paying. Neither Christ nor any New Testament writer in the least relaxes the obligation to pay tithe" (*SDA Bible Dictionary*, p. 1128).

The Storehouse Today

What served as a storehouse in New Testament times? What would constitute the storehouse today?

In the Old Testament the tithe provided for the support of those who ministered to the spiritual needs of the people, namely, the Levites. "I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the Tent of Meeting" (Num. 18:21).

Paul refers to this practice to show how pastors and leaders of the Christian Era should be supported. "Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:13, 14).

Logic suggests that since New Testament churches replaced the Temple of the Old Testament, the collection was done through the churches, which would be the New Testament storehouse.

Did funds go to central locations similar to the treasuries of our local conferences, from which pastors' salaries were dispersed? Obviously not, though on one occasion Paul did arrange for certain funds to be taken to Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:1-4). And Acts 15 records a kind of "conference committee meeting" at which James seems to have presided (verses 13-21). This chapter, along with the instruction in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 2 about elders and deacons, reveals a definite organization for the early church.

Financial Policies

On what basis, then, have we established the organizational and financial policies that the Seventh-day Adventist Church employs today?

No organization can succeed without administrators and orderly procedures. Order, in fact, has been called heaven's first law.

God led Jethro to suggest that Moses "select capable men"—men who feared God and were trustworthy—and "appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens" (Ex. 18:21). In the New Testament Paul urged that "everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way" (1 Cor. 14:40).

In his spiritual gifts list in 1 Corinthians 12, Paul includes "governments" (verse 28, KJV)—a body of officials who guide and direct. For "governments" the NIV has "gifts of administration."

James and Ellen White, along with other early Adventist leaders, included these principles as the church developed its administrative and financial structure—a system that has made it one of the organizational marvels of the world. In 1902 Ellen White noted that it had been "nearly 40 years since organization was introduced among us as a people" (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 24). She wrote of the growth that had taken place, and asked, "What is the secret of our prosperity?"

Here is her reply:

"We have moved under the orders of the Captain of our salvation. God has blessed our united efforts. The truth has spread and flourished. Institutions have multiplied. The mustard seed has grown to a great tree. The system of organization has proved a grand success. Systematic benevolence was entered into according to the Bible plan" (*ibid.*, p. 27).

Notice the relationship between success and "the Bible plan" regarding finances. We should praise God for the guidance He has given in this matter. He has directed in the plan whereby tithe funds go first to the local church treasurer, then on to our conference organizations.

What would happen if any independent ministry that comes along were free to solicit tithe?

The Bible records the story of a group of leaders who became upset with Moses. They felt that under his administration the church would never get into Canaan.

Moses dealt firmly with this problem. He spoke first to Korah and other Levites in the group. "You Levites have gone too far!" he told them (Num. 16:7). He then summoned Dathan and Abiram—two Reubenites who with Korah were leading the dissatisfied ones. But they refused to meet with Moses, hurling at him the charge "You haven't brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey" (verse 14).

God dealt sternly with this cancer of rebellion against His chosen leaders. The next day the earth swallowed all three men, their families, and 250 other "well-known community leaders who had been appointed members of the council" (verse 2). The next day a plague destroyed 14,700 people who had sympathized with the rebellion.

Let's suppose that God hadn't taken such drastic action. Suppose these leaders had formed an independent ministry with the purpose that *they* would lead the church into Canaan. Suppose, also, that they had started collecting tithe. This would have caused the cancer to spread even more rapidly.

Numbers 18 emphasizes the location of the storehouse. In that chapter, which lists some of the duties of the priests and Levites, God told Aaron: "I myself have put you in charge of the offerings presented to me" (verse 8). Here God speaks of tithe four times (verses 21, 24, 26, 28). We should praise Him that a similar orderliness controls how tithe is collected and dispersed in our church today.

Financial Accountability

Misuse of funds rarely occurs in a business or church that has sound fiscal policies with accountability and openness.

The fiscal management that led to the Jim and Tammy Bakker scandal

has made millions of people suspicious of all churches and ministries. Wouldn't it therefore be wise for every legitimate independent ministry to be totally open about the sources and disbursement of funds received, with regular audits by an outside firm? The New York Van Ministry, for example, is regularly audited by the same firm that audits the conference office.

It would be well, also, for an independent ministry to make a financial statement available to any donor who requests one. I am acquainted with a large community church, for example, where even a casual visitor can ask for and receive a financial statement.

Do Ellen White's writings leave room for independent ministries to solicit tithe?

"It is part of the minister's work," Ellen White wrote, "to teach those who accept the truth through his efforts, to bring the tithe to the storehouse, as an acknowledgment of their dependence upon God" (*Gospel Workers*, p. 370). She is equally clear about how tithe should be used. "It is to be brought into His treasury to be used to sustain the gospel laborers in their work" (*ibid.*, p. 226). "God has not changed; the tithe is still to be used for the support of the ministry" (*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 250).

Ellen White's Example

Some object that Ellen White sometimes bypassed the organized work in the disbursement of her tithe. She explained that on occasion she had used her tithe "to aid the White and Colored ministers who were neglected and did not receive sufficient, properly to support their families. When my attention was called to aged ministers, White or Black, it was my special duty to investigate into their necessities and supply their needs. This was to be my special work, and I have done this in a number of cases" (letter 267, 1905).

In 1905 the church had no retirement plan. The sustentation plan, which made provision for aged or incapacitated workers, went into effect in 1911. Concerning the times she rendered the above help, W. C. White notes: "These experiences relate mostly to the years we were in Europe and Australia, and to the years 1900 to 1906, in behalf of the work in the Southern states."

He then adds: "During the greater part of the time since my connection with Mother's business in 1881, a full

tithe has been paid on her salary, to church or conference treasurer." On the increase from her books, she put aside an amount greater than the tithe and from time to time drew from that fund to help neglected or aged ministers. For more information about how God led her in these matters, see pages 389-397 of *Ellen G. White: The Early Elmshaven Years*.

Does Ellen White's practice of meeting a need now largely cared for by retirement funds set a precedent for today? Does it open the door for independent ministries to solicit and accept tithe?

A message published in 1909 speaks clearly to that issue. "The tithe is the Lord's, and those who meddle with it will be punished with the loss of their heavenly treasure unless they repent. Let the work no longer be hedged up because the tithe has been diverted into various channels other than the one to which the Lord has said it should go. Provision is to be made for these other lines of work. They are to be sustained, but not from the tithe. God has not changed; the tithe is still to be used for the support of the ministry" (*Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 249, 250).

What I Would Do

Let's go back to my opening illustration. If I were to start an independent ministry, I would not solicit or knowingly accept tithe. I would not want the curse of Malachi 3:9 to fall upon me or my ministry.

I would willingly cooperate with denominational leaders and seek their guidance as I developed this ministry. Then I would expect the floodgates of heaven to open and pour out so much blessing that the ministry would not have room enough to receive it (Mal. 3:10). □

SHOULD THEY

COOPERATE WITH

CHURCH LEADERS?

No organization can survive without administrators and orderly procedures. We find numerous illustrations in both the Old and New Testaments that order is one

of the first laws of heaven. Let's add to that basic fact these three biblical truths:

■ Lucifer became the first to develop an independent spirit that led him to declare war against all authority (Isa. 14:12-14).

■ Paul urged respect for all proper authority (Rom. 13:1-7). "Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities," he told a young pastor (Titus 3:1).^{*} An exception, of course, would be a government ordering something in violation of the law of God (Acts 4:18-20). That respect, Paul told the Thessalonian believers, should include those "who are over you in the Lord" (1 Thess. 5:12, 13).

■ Solomon twice urges this leadership principle: "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety" (Prov. 11:14; 24:6, KJV). This principle helps keep a strong-minded leader from making wrong decisions based largely on his own determinations.

The incorporation of this principle into the early Christian church can be seen in Acts 15. When a controversy arose about circumcision, "the apostles and elders met to consider this question" (verse 6). As with most committees, there was "much discussion" (verse 7).

After everyone had a chance to speak, James stated what he thought should be done. The committee agreed, and the decision was sent out to the churches (verses 12-31). The fact that this administrative group operated in Acts 15 shows that the persecutions recorded in earlier chapters did not dissolve church organization—a fact that can bring courage as we enter earth's final events.

In 1902 Ellen White wrote about the great blessings that had come to the Seventh-day Adventist Church through the organization introduced nearly 40 years earlier (*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 24-32). Five years later she warned, "The spirit of pulling away from our fellow laborers, the spirit of disorganization, is in the very air we breathe" (*ibid.*, p. 488).

The Needed Balance

There exists, of course, an opposite error: the rigid control that prevailed in much of the religious world during the Dark Ages. The Bible contains principles that help protect us from both extremes.

■ Love for one another similar to

the love that Christ demonstrated (John 15:12, 13).

■ Development of the oneness and unity that Christ prayed for (John 17:20-23).

Testimonies to Ministers contains a chapter, "Individual Responsibility and Christian Unity," that deals with the problems of too much and too little administrative control. It speaks of the necessity of harmonious action and unity of effort, and states that men should be counselors, not rulers, and that they must be amenable to God. To a warning against unsanctified independence is added an appeal for unity.

The counsel appeared in 1907, about six years after the major reorganization of the church in 1901, although parts of the "Amenable to God" section were written in 1895 and 1903, and a portion of "An Appeal for Unity" carries the date 1883.

Recently a journal published by an independent ministry carried the section "Amenable to God" from the above chapter. It contains statements such as the following:

"The Lord has not placed any one of His human agencies under the dictation and control of those who are themselves but erring mortals. He has not placed upon men the power to say, You shall do this, and you shall not do that" (p. 493).

"No man is a proper judge of another man's duty. Man is responsible to God; and as finite, erring men take into their hands the jurisdiction of their fellowmen, as if the Lord commissioned them to lift up and cast down, all heaven is filled with indignation" (pp. 493, 494).

Do words like these free a pastor from responsibility to the conference that hires him? Do they allow an independent ministry to ignore counsel from the administrators responsible for the region where that ministry is located? A look at the historical context of the above warnings will help answer these questions.

The General Conference Executive Committee, which had only three members in 1863, increased over the years until it had 13 members in 1899. Six of these were spread out across North America, and two lived overseas. The few members at headquarters in Battle Creek tried to control even the smallest details in the remotest parts of the world.

At the 1901 General Conference session, Ellen White addressed this im-

possible situation. She spoke of the growth taking place, and urged, "Never should the mind of one man or the minds of a few men be regarded as sufficient in wisdom and power to control the work and say what plans shall be followed. The burden of the work in this broad field should not rest upon two or three men" (manuscript 43, 1901).

In this context she spoke of "those who would like to exercise kingly power" (*ibid.*). The reorganization in 1901 provided thrilling evidence of God's leading. For a more complete account, and these statements, see chapters 5-7 of *Ellen G. White: The Early Elmshaven Years*.

Today every division and conference has extensive committees. Laypersons participate at the conference level. No longer do decisions at the General Conference—or at any other conference level—rest upon the shoulders of "two or three men."

Emphasis Upon Unity

The chapter in *Testimonies to Ministers* that contains the "Amenable to God" section also has sections entitled "Necessity of Harmonious Action" and "Unity of Effort," where we find statements such as this: "[Some] declare that they will not take any man's say-so; that they are amenable to no man. I have been instructed that it is Satan's special effort to lead men to feel that God is pleased to have them choose their own course, independent of the counsel of their brethren" (pp. 488, 489). The author adds that "it is not a good sign when men refuse to unite with their brethren and prefer to act alone" (p. 490).

In the same chapter, the section entitled "Unsanctified Independence" contains suggestions such as the following: "It is our duty to counsel with our brethren, and to heed their advice. We are to seek their counsel, and when they give it, we are not to cast it away, as if they were our enemies" (p. 500). "Let not men yield to the burning desire to become great leaders, or the desire independently to devise and lay plans for themselves and for the work of God" (p. 501).

For a balanced picture of what constitutes too much or too little control, see the entire chapter "Individual Responsibility and Christian Unity."

Questions That Need Asking

Should the "Amenable to God" sec-

tion of the chapter be quoted without including something from the section "Unsanctified Independence"? Is that fair to listeners or readers? Is it even honest?

In her role as God's messenger, Ellen White sometimes had to deal with people who tended to be too independent. In 1875 she wrote to Brother A—a minister with "a strong, set will, a very independent spirit" (*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 414). He lacked "humbleness of mind" and had "cultivated a combative spirit" (*ibid.*, pp. 422, 423).

Such a person is difficult to advise, for he often won't listen. She wrote him a 20-page letter on individual independence (*ibid.*, pp. 414-434), the last six pages of which deal with the authority of the church. In these she gave him—and us—this warning: "The word of God does not give license for one man to set up his judgment in opposition to the judgment of the church, neither is he allowed to urge his opinions against the opinions of the church. If there were no church discipline and government, the church would go to fragments; it could not hold together as a body" (*ibid.*, p. 428).

A Warning From Paul

In his farewell to the elders at Ephesus, Paul gave a warning that rings down through the centuries to church leaders today. "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. . . . I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears" (Acts 20:28-31).

Ellen White echoes Paul's warnings. "There have ever been in the church those who are constantly inclined toward individual independence. They seem unable to realize that independence of spirit is liable to lead the human agent to have too much confidence in himself and to trust in his own judgment rather than to respect the counsel and highly esteem the judgment of his brethren, especially those in the offices that God has appointed for the leadership of His people. God has invested His church

with special authority and power which no one can be justified in disregarding and despising, for he who does this despises the voice of God" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 163, 164). □

USE OF THE STRAIGHT TESTIMONY

A number of groups and individuals have a burden to proclaim what they call "the straight testimony." Some feel that they have been chosen by God to go anywhere and everywhere to give that message.

"Test everything," Paul urged. "Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil" (1 Thess. 5:21, 22).^{*} Our purpose in this article is to find out:

- What is the straight testimony?
- What are the benefits of straightforwardness?
- What might be improper uses of straight testimonies?
- What themes, if presented in the power of the Holy Spirit, do the most to bring revival and godly living?

Among Seventh-day Adventists, "the straight testimony" is generally applied to the Laodicean message of Revelation 3:14-22.

After 1844, Sabbathkeeping Adventists still thought of themselves as in the Philadelphia era of church history. Then James White, in 1856, startled Sabbathkeepers by showing that *they* were Laodiceans.¹

A Revival Dies

The response was astonishing. With only about 2,000 Sabbathkeeping Adventists at the time, hundreds of letters came to the *Review* thanking James White for his plain speaking. A revival began that, tragically, didn't last.² Historian Arthur W. Spalding gives this summary of what happened:

"Like an electric shock the Laodicean message ran through the ranks. . . . It wrought mightily in the hearts of Seventh-day Adventists. There was a turning to God. . . . It was a lifting up of the doctrine of justification by faith. . . . If it had had free course, it would soon have finished the gospel message. . . .

"But the work done was not thorough enough. The people generally

were content with half measures, a little stirring, and then a settling back on the lees. . . . They were content with a little victory. And being so content they backslid."³

Thirteen months later, Ellen White penned a message entitled "The Shaking" (*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 179-184). In it she reported seeing two groups. One responded to this new understanding of the Laodicean message by earnestly seeking God. The other group, careless and indifferent, did not.

Ellen White went on to describe what might have been: a powerful proclamation of the Laodicean message, a shaking, new members coming in, the latter rain, a time of great confusion among the nations, and the return of Christ.

She declared: "The testimony of the True Witness has not been half heeded. The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded" (p. 181).

That was in 1857. What can we learn from the revival that died? What would God have us do with the Laodicean message as we enter the 1990s? Would straight testimonies provide a cure-all for our lukewarmness and for problems such as broken homes?

Historical Perspective

In her writings Ellen White used the expression "straight testimony" sparingly.

While serving on the board of a self-supporting institution, I heard so much about the straight testimony that I concluded Ellen White's writings must be filled with the expression. But the *Comprehensive Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White* contains only two references under "Straight Testimony"—both to a statement made in 1904.

The Ellen G. White laser disc concordance, which contains references to almost all uses by Ellen White of some 35,000 words, reveals that her entire writings contain the expression "straight testimony" about 60 times—mostly in statements made in the first third of her ministry.

At times Ellen White used the expression in a context that had no direct relationship to the Laodicean message.

In *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, for example, she wrote in 1864 about "the testimonies borne against hurtful in-

dulgences, as tea, coffee, snuff, and tobacco" (p. 428). One's witness on just about any subject related to Christian living—if given in a straightforward and Christlike manner—could be called a straight testimony.

Anyone with a burden to preach straight testimonies needs to be open and straightforward. God's Word excludes all hidden agendas and behind-the-scene maneuvering in attempts to reform the church. His Word totally forbids any subtle undermining of confidence in the church.

In Revelation 3:14-22 Christ's straightforward rebuke is mingled with love, compassion, and tenderness. He condemns our lukewarmness and pride but graciously offers the gold of faith and love, the white robes of His righteousness, and eyesalve for clear discernment.

"Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline," He tells us. "If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me" (verses 19, 20).

Beautiful Message

Doesn't that make the Laodicean message beautiful? The rebuke is strong, but how precious the gold, what security the white raiment provides, how good to see clearly, to sit down in fellowship with Jesus!

Satan well knows the power of the Laodicean message and the Bible teachings about righteousness by faith. If you were Satan, how would you keep these truths from being shared effectively?

One author wrote that he would do this: "Assembling my satanic hosts, I would announce: 'We will find those persons in the church, disgruntled and critical, those who lust for leadership, and even some sincere in longing to see the full fruition of the purposes of God in His church. Then we will organize them into little groups who will stir up disaffection and call the faithful ones out of the church. And we will have such groups preach so vociferously on the three subjects most dangerous to us that the ministers of the church, especially the younger ones, will be afraid to preach on those subjects lest they be classed with the dissident factions.'"⁴

All through history the church has had to deal with two extremes: a tendency to excuse or ignore evil, and a zeal that comes on too strong.

Aaron's behavior in the golden calf

incident of Exodus 32 illustrates the first error. His desire to please allowed a terrible apostasy to develop. God held him responsible. When we fail to use our position or influence to prevent evil, we become as guilty as if we had committed the evil ourselves.

Our history provides examples of the opposite extreme—coming on too strong. Shortly after the 1888 crisis, a minister began to dwell on living without sin, the shaking, and related topics. In 1890 Ellen White wrote him a message entitled “The Peril of Extreme Views” (*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 176-184).

Apparently he looked at church members, and probably some leaders also, who did not reach his standard of holiness. As he lost confidence in the organized body, he began to talk about a “coming out” from the denomination to “a purer, holier people.” He collected statements from the *Testimonies* about the shaking and the close of probation and used them to support his views. When other ministers would not join him in his efforts at reform, he accused them of “walking in darkness” (p. 179).

This minister, Ellen White declared, was in danger of being “separated from the work” (p. 176). She urged him to “dwell on such subjects as Christ’s willingness to forgive sins, to receive the sinner, to save that which is lost, subjects that inspire hope and courage” (p. 177).

As for the shaking and the time of trouble, she cautioned him not to dwell on these topics (p. 180). She then drew a lesson applicable for all time:

As Bad as Laodicea

“Satan’s object is accomplished just as surely when men run ahead of Christ and do the work He has never entrusted to their hand, as when they remain in the Laodicean state, lukewarm, feeling rich and increased with goods, and in need of nothing. The two classes are equally stumbling blocks” (p. 180).

In an 1873 message to the Laodicean church, published in volume 3 of the *Testimonies*, Ellen White deals with robbing God in tithes and offerings. In that context she wrote: “The plain, straight testimony must live in the church, or the curse of God will rest upon His people as surely as it did upon ancient Israel because of their sins” (p. 269).

She also points out that not all “are fitted to correct the erring.” They lack wisdom, mercy, love, and tender compassion.

Some individuals who develop a burden to correct and criticize the church and its leaders try to justify their strong words by quoting this passage from volume 1 of the *Testimonies*: “In this fearful time, just before Christ is to come the second time, God’s faithful preachers will have to bear a still more pointed testimony than was borne by John the Baptist” (p. 321).

This is *not* a good statement for critics to quote. It was written to a minister in Wisconsin at a time when fanaticism had arisen among some members in that state. This minister could have helped curb the fanaticism, but neglected to assist the leaders in dealing with the problem. Ellen White wrote him a letter, now found in the *Testimonies* under the title “Jealousy and Faultfinding” (vol. 1, pp. 311-323), in which she gave a very straight testimony to this “Brother G.”

His sins included neglecting to support denominational leaders—those whom God had “seen fit to place at the head of the work” (p. 312). Other faults mentioned included “seeking to lead out independent of the body” (p. 312), jealousy and stubbornness (p. 312), and criticism of the *Review* (p. 316).

If I should develop a similar attitude—nonsupport of leadership and leading out “independent of the body”—I would do well not to quote from the message to this Wisconsin minister. The immediate context speaks of the heavy burdens borne by denominational leaders, causing sleepless nights and agonizing prayer (p. 321). If my criticism and independent spirit are adding to those burdens, would not I too deserve a rebuke “more pointed . . . than was borne by John the Baptist”?

We do not deny that leaders make mistakes. Institutions make mistakes and come short of God’s ideal. Matthew 18 suggests that we go to them directly, or we can write to them. They may not see wisdom in our suggestions. But at least we will have done what we can. Can’t we then leave the results with God?

“But,” some may ask, “what about the Laodicean lukewarmness that pervades much of the church? And the worldliness? And the sins?”

Themes That Transform

What transforms lukewarm church members into vibrant, growing, enthusiastic Christians? What motivates people to seek the repentance Christ urges in the Laodicean message?

Paul points out that “the goodness of God” leads sinners to repentance (Rom. 2:4, KJV). Pointing to the Source of transforming power, Jesus said, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (John 12:32, KJV).

After raising up a church in the worldly city of Corinth, Paul told them, “I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom. . . . I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:1, 2).

Ellen White urged that “we are to go forth to labor surrounded with the atmosphere of Gethsemane and Calvary” (*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 12). The most life-changing of all testimonies is the testimony from Calvary. Within the sunlight of an uplifted cross, we can see the fulfillment of the italicized promises in the following two paragraphs:

“The Lord calls for a renewal of the straight testimony borne in years past. He calls for a renewal of spiritual life. The spiritual energies of His people have long been torpid, but *there is to be a resurrection from apparent death.*”

“By prayer and confession of sin we must clear the King’s highway. As we do this, the power of the Spirit *will come to us*” (*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 297; italics supplied).

God wants all of us—leadership, laity, pastors, independent ministries, everyone—to “press together, press together” (*ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 293). Let’s see what unity combined with much prayer and steady enthusiasm can do during this new decade! □

*Unless otherwise noted, Bible texts in these articles are from the New International Version.

¹ Arthur W. Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, vol. 2, p. 287.

² Felix A. Lorenz, *The Only Hope* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1976), pp. 44, 45.

³ Spalding, pp. 287, 288.

⁴ Lorenz, p. 101.

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APPENDIX IV

“THE PASTOR’S HEARTACHE”

EDITORIAL



The Pastor's Heartache

Recently I spent some time talking with a fine young pastor and his wife. Their enthusiasm and joy in the Lord refreshed my heart; not surprisingly, their congregation is growing rapidly.

Then I asked them, "What is the chief problem or heartache you meet in your ministry?" Without a pause the young man replied, "The videotapes and private publications that some people are circulating. They sow distrust and suspicion, and undermine the church."

He went on to describe how one of his members received a videotape, made copies, circulated them, and threw the church into confusion. The pastor had to call a business meeting, share the facts with members, and labor with various individuals before the church could be united again and go forward in evangelistic endeavors.

This couple's experience is not unique. Pastors and administrators in North America spend much time and effort these days in trying to protect the church from the inroads of false teachings and divisive influences. Many have appealed to us to strengthen their hands.

I share the heartache of the young pastor and our other leaders who see the church they love weakened or divided. Only those who have struggled to bring men and women to Christ can know this sorrow.

Over the years I have seen various people with "new light" or new interpretations rise up among us. Some produce publications; some flourish for a time. They suck into their orbit various types of members, including the earnest but naive, and the disgruntled.

Eventually the teacher and his movement fade away. Many of his supporters find their way back to the church, but also some do not—good, sincere people who are now disillusioned.

The problem is as old as Christianity itself. Paul's letters reveal that he struggled on two fronts—against the tendency of some to worldliness (e.g., 2 Tim. 4:10; Col. 3:1-10), and against those who created dissensions and divisions (Rom. 16:17, 18; Phil. 1:15-18).

John the Beloved felt similar burdens for the early believers. "Do not love the world or the things in the world," he counseled them (1 John 2:15-17).^{*} But he also warned about those who, claiming superior knowledge, "went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us" (verse 19). He told the people not to receive anyone "who goes ahead and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ" (2 John 9-11), or those who refused to acknowledge the authority of leaders (3 John 9, 10).

Strong Confidence

Despite the current heartache, I have strong confidence in the future of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. First, because I believe that Jesus is Lord of the church, and He will bring it through every difficulty. And second, because I believe the great majority of our people have enough sound judgment to detect any person, publication, or so-called ministry that weakens the church rather than strengthens it.

I urge Adventists to get the facts. Not all who take the title "pastor" are pastors: some have never been ordained; some were once ordained but were removed from the ministry. And some whose publications circulate among Adventists are not even members of this church!

Get the facts. Get the facts before you swallow something that comes in the mail. Find out who is publishing it. Get the facts before you send money (how often money is the "bottom line"!).

How do you get the facts? Write or call the North American Division office, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904-6600. Telephone: (301) 680-6459.

"Press together, press together," urged Ellen White on several occasions (*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 69; *Evangelism*, p. 102, etc.). Those who follow this counsel will:

1. *Help to unify the church*, not divide her. They will sow seeds of love, not suspicion. They will love the church, as Christ loves her—He who gave His own life for her (Eph. 5:25).

2. *Win people to Christ*. Their work will be outer- rather than inner-directed, as was Christ's.

3. *Support leaders*, as Scripture admonishes (Heb. 13:7, 17).

4. *Exalt Christ, not themselves*. Beware of anyone who sets up himself or herself as the one with superior knowledge!

5. *Use responsibly* the Bible and Ellen White's writings. Remember, merely quoting inspired writings proves nothing—the devil also does that. And any use of these writings that divides the church rather than building it up cannot be of the Lord.

6. *Support the financial structure* of the church. They will not seek to attract tithe moneys for their own use, nor will they drain off support from the established mission of the church.

Jesus, our heavenly pastor, prayed that His followers might become "perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me" (John 17:23). His heart also aches when His people are divided.

^{*}Bible texts in this article are from the Revised Standard Version.

WILLIAM G. JOHNSON

APPENDIX V
ANALYSIS OF *OUR FIRM FOUNDATION*

Objectives of Hope International and *Our Firm Foundation*

Declared Mission of Hope International

1. Reason for organization: "Of particular concern to the charter members of Hope were the doctrinal aberrations brought into the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a result of the Martin-Barnhouse doctrinal discussions with some of the officers of the General Conference and the printing of the book *Questions on Doctrine*."¹
2. Mission: "Our mission is not to tear down or destroy the work of the church, but to uphold it and help build it up along the lines that God directed." "What is our mission? To start a grass-roots revival in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. To train people to give the loud-cry message. To follow God's blueprint exactly in all we do. To spread hope around this entire troubled world."²

Declared Mission of *Our Firm Foundation*

The following statement appears as a masthead statement in Volume 1, Number 1, page 3, of *Our Firm Foundation* and has remained throughout succeeding issues of the journal:

It is the mission of Hope International and the editors of *Our Firm Foundation* to give the straight testimony [understood as the Laodicean message] and to present Christ and Him crucified. The days that yet remain of this world are few, and what we must do we must do quickly. We must boldly proclaim the truths that place us on so firm a foundation in the midst of this troubled world.

With the September 1988 (vol. 3, No. 9, p. 3) issue an additional statement of mission was added at the bottom of the table of contents. This second statement appears in nearly every succeeding issue. But it raises a question about the ministry's complete loyalty to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Hope International is a special ministry intended to assist in the God-given work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We believe this Remnant Church of Bible prophecy has been brought into existence by the calling of the Lord, and we look for its final triumph in purity at the second coming of Christ. That the church does not now perfectly reflect the will of our Lord is cause for sorrow, but not for discouragement. The Word of God stands pledged that all within her borders will be sifted and tried, and though the greater portion

will fail the test, there will yet remain a remnant to honor the Lord by their obedience to all His commands. Therefore, Hope International urges upon all the duty of supporting the Seventh-day Adventist Church in every way possible, *insofar as is consistent with the principles of the government of God and the leading of His Holy Spirit upon the heart.*" (Italics supplied.)

Editorial Pledge

*We have pledged ourselves not to deal with personalities or call attention to specific mistakes of the past or present.*³

Kinds of Articles

Most covers of *Our Firm Foundation* list the basic truths that the journal will support: the seventh-day Sabbath; immutable law of God; the everlasting gospel; nonimmortality of the soul; three angels' messages; the sanctuary. In addition to these subjects, other useful articles appear on such topics as marriage, education, music, health, denominational history, and the like. Several articles by Ellen G. White are usually printed in each of the issues of the 32-page journal.

Early Stance of *Our Firm Foundation* on the SDA Church

The charge that the SDA Church is Babylon is rejected; it is perceived to be Jerusalem.

These charges assert not that the basis of the church is wrong, but that the church has shown herself disloyal to that base. Every scandal, every shortcoming, every failure of the church or its officers adds weight to the claim. But is the conclusion true? Has the church become Babylon? Should you and I withdraw from its fellowship?⁴

But note what [Ellen G. White] says: Not Babylon, but "*Jerusalem* is a representation of what the church will be if. . . ." Those who identify the Seventh-day Adventist Church as Babylon have missed the mark by at least 530 miles.⁵

Target Audience

While Hope International has some outreach to non-SDAs through the distribution of *Truth for Today* (a paper designed for this) and the fostering of the distribution of Ellen White books, its ministry is largely directed to the membership of the SDA Church. ("We are asking our sub-

scribers and supporters to take this special edition to every member of God's church. The hour is late, but the Loud Cry cannot sound until everyone has heard and understood God's special message for this hour."⁶

Particular Doctrinal Concerns

Although Hope International/*Our Firm Foundation* uphold the 27 fundamental beliefs of the SDA Church, the group also tenaciously embraces certain positions on three doctrinal issues, two of which have never been addressed and adopted into the fundamentals by the world church. Although sincere Christians differ on these issues (the settling of which is really not essential to either salvation or the task of the church), these are held as "historic" Adventism and anything different is viewed as apostasy from the Adventist faith. Articles on these subjects or references to them run continuously throughout the volumes of the journal. Some examples may be cited:

The Human Nature of Christ

Like us (homoïoma), Jesus inherited a sinful, fallen nature. . . . From birth He had the two natures—spiritual and carnal. From birth His carnal nature was kept in subjection. Throughout His lifetime He continued to crucify the deeds of the "flesh" so that never once, even by a thought, did He yield to its clamorings.⁷

Other examples: "The Nature of Christ,"⁸ "Manifest in the Flesh,"⁹ "Food for Thought,"¹⁰ "Where Did Pastor Baker Go Wrong?"¹¹ "Two Christs Within the Church,"¹² "The True Message of 1888,"¹³ "Let This Mind Be In You,"¹⁴ "Our Saviour,"¹⁵ "A Problem of Intellectual Integrity,"¹⁶ "In Every Way But One,"¹⁷ and most of the March 1991 (vol. 6, No. 3) issue.

The Doctrine of Sin

Sin is not basically the way man is, but the way man chooses. Sin is the consent. . . . Not until we have joined our own will to mankind's rebellion against God . . . does guilt enter in. . . . If sin is not nature but choice, then Christ could inherit our fallen, sinful nature without thereby becoming a sinner. He remained ever sinless because His conscious choice was always obedience to God, never allowing His inherited nature to control His choices.¹⁸

Other examples: "Roman Catholic Roots of the New Theology,"¹⁹ "The New Theology and the Truth About Sin,"²⁰ "To Sin or Not to Sin?"²¹

Cleansing/Victory Over Sin

In order to support the view that man cannot obey fully, the "New Adventism" finds it necessary to postulate that Christ, who all agree did obey perfectly, had

a nature which cannot be ours, for if Christ obeyed in a nature that could be ours, there would be no excuse for sinning. And of course a central theme of the "New Adventism" is that we will continue to sin until the second coming.²²

Other examples: "The Cleansing of the Sanctuary,"²³ "Is Obedience Possible?"²⁴ Editorial,²⁵ "Can Man Cease From Sin?"²⁶ "To Pass the Test."²⁷

Observation: The reader of *Our Firm Foundation* will find that the discussion of these moot views is not done in a neutral manner with a humble attitude poised to search out what is the truth about these matters as may be revealed in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Rather, the presentations move to rebut what is perceived as false doctrines supplanting historic Adventist belief. Consequently, the very manner of the approach to the discussion of these questions cannot help engendering unwholesome attitudes in the reader's mind toward the organized church, which is viewed as adopting, if not embracing, wrong positions on these matters.

Wide-sweeping Condemning Generalizations

In a large portion of the editorials and in some of the non-Ellen G. White articles, there runs a thread of generalizations that are negative and condemning. The sins and failures of the membership/church are held up to view. Because they contain some truth and are repeated continuously, such assertions tend to build up in the mind of the reader the conviction that the Adventist Church must be in a complete state of apostasy. The charges are not so strong in the beginning issues, in which more positive and hopeful statements are made. But as the years continue, they move to serious accusations of gross apostasy. These expressions fall into general categories under the overreaching assertion of Adventism's Laodicean condition. We cite only a few of the scores of similar accusations.

Failure to Follow Spirit of Prophecy Counsels

To a great degree the church has disregarded the health instruction, and the world now is listening to the Eastern religions which are proclaiming it.²⁸

Our almost total disregard for the Spirit of Prophecy counsel in all areas . . .²⁹

How long will we continue to disregard God's instructions given to us through the Spirit of Prophecy?³⁰

All the angels of heaven grieve over our neglect and almost total disregard for the Testimonies to the church.³¹

But a greater tragedy has been in the making for more than 100 years. That is the disregarding of this gift by most of our leaders and laity.³²

The book, *The Great Controversy*, is unread by many of our laity, leaders, and pastors.³³

Can we not see the almost total disregard of the Spirit of Prophecy that has brought us to the crisis point in our educational and medical institutions? Can we not see that we are still here because of our rebellion against God's perfect plan to finish His work?³⁴

It cannot be denied that in recent years there have been an increasing number of decisions that were based on the idea that the Spirit of Prophecy counsels do not apply to our time.³⁵

Much of what church leadership is carrying out in the program and institutions of the remnant organization is directly contrary to, or in place of, specific counsels from the Lord through the Spirit of Prophecy. There is serious disregard for God's instructions of how to carry out or operate His end-time work.³⁶

Church Failure

More than 100 years have gone; two world wars; millions have died; thousands of SDAs in grave; the blueprint not followed:

Education—failed: "But today we are educating our young for worldly positions, and very few have entered into God's vineyard to serve. Now we are told that 71 percent of our youth are leaving the church each year."³⁷

Medical—failed: "But again, we adopted the plan of the world, and now many of our world medical institutions are ready to collapse financially."³⁸

Publishing—failed: "But today, we find the colporteur ministry is failing to bring the message of salvation to the doors of those who are doomed to destruction."³⁹

Marriage—failed: "Our divorce rate in the North American Division has nearly reached the divorce rate of the world."⁴⁰

Evangelism—failed: "Most of our converts are leaving us in the first year."⁴¹

We are no more ready for the second coming than the Jewish church was ready for Christ's first advent. We have given a medallion to the pope. In Communist countries we have quietly condoned children attending school on the Sabbath. . . . The church is weak, unable to grapple successfully with the error, the immorality, and the sins of our country, the world, and our church. And why this weakness?⁴²

We as a people—from leadership on down to laity—have never understood this [Laodicean] message. . . . The Laodicean message that should have brought the church to its knees . . . has failed from 1852 to this day. . . . Instead we are "leaning on a false hope" that our professions will save us.⁴³

If we refuse to humble ourselves and pray for the Holy Spirit, there is no other course that God can follow but to reject us and spew us out of His mouth. What a

tragedy!⁴⁴

Our religious meetings abound in the pleasantries and syrupy love-talk we would expect at a popular Christian revival. Nurtured on this emphasis, thousands of Adventist youth know very little of their faith.⁴⁵

Does Adventism today really understand its mission?⁴⁶

The Laodicean condition is strangling the church today. . . . We believe we are all right when we are all wrong.⁴⁷

Men and women are leaving this church because so often they are hearing nothing that challenges them in this great final moment of earth's history. They are hearing a message that has no significance; it is irrelevant.⁴⁸

God's people have been unwilling to renounce sin because they feel no need for true repentance.⁴⁹

Our prevailing spirit is infidelity and apostasy manifested by opposition to the plain word of God and to the testimony of His Spirit.⁵⁰

Practices we once avoided are now condoned—some with official sanction, many more without it.⁵¹

But as long as Baptist ministers come to our churches and teach our people . . . , as long as we go to Evangelical churches to learn how to be more Pentecostal in our church services, as long as funds go to projects that are out of harmony with God's will, as long as ministers are being trained in such techniques as neurolinguistic programming—Independent Ministries will be here to do the work that God has given them to do. The problem is . . . the general trend of the decisions church leadership has made the last 40 years.⁵²

Somehow the power of the gospel has, for the most part, left the Adventist movement in the Western countries. . . . In short, the condition of the church in North America, as well as in Europe and Australia, has become an embarrassment.⁵³

The church is doing business as usual. Not only does the trumpet no longer have a certain sound, but there is an attempt to silence it altogether. We all seem to be asleep in our carnal security while probation is soon to close for the world and God's people.⁵⁴

What a shaking we face with 6 million members, the majority of whom do not understand the three angels' messages and the message of the cleansing of the sanctuary.⁵⁵

Disparaging Church Endeavors

With nearly 5 million members, with tremendous wealth, our investments with the world exceeding \$400

million, our laity and ministry holding high degrees in education, and our institutions of learning and healing encircling the world, our statistics are very encouraging—until we understand that each day 325,000 babies are born. Then we must confess that our programs will never accomplish the finishing of the work until the church is willing to repent of all rebellion and apostasy.⁵⁶

Let us not say, because of all the things we have done, and the countries we have entered, and our financial successes, that we are on track. We are told that revival and reformation is our greatest need.⁵⁷

Our statistics seem marvelous—we have again doubled our membership in the last five years. . . . But is this proof that God is guiding His church in these crisis days?⁵⁸

Now in this important hour when the signs of the times are screaming . . . the church seems paralyzed.⁵⁹

We are subsidizing our schools around the world by more than \$71 million a year. Few of our youth, however, are being trained in the way of the Lord for service in His great harvest field. When more than 70 percent are leaving us each year, should we not be concerned; should we not seek the Lord's counsel?⁶⁰

The church has been more than 100 years attempting to finish the gospel commission and we seem to have been unable to touch the great masses of humanity. Our attempt to double the membership of the church each five years is, in comparison to the phenomenal growth of the world's population, like bailing out the ocean with a bucket.⁶¹

Every time we add members through baptism who do not understand the three angels' messages by experience, and who do not believe that God has enough power to keep them from sinning, [it] increases our apostasy.⁶²

Sins in the Church/Falling Standards

In most cases the church has offered no official change in its position, but the standards have been lowered and lost by default. . . . The percentage of pastors, administrators, and evangelists who preach on them . . . has steadily declined year by year. In dress, diet, tithing, movies, coffee drinking, Sabbathkeeping, and divorce there has been an obvious slacking of conviction.⁶³

Laodicea . . . is so much like the world in her institutions, her business transactions, her eating, her dress, and her deportment that the world now accepts her as one with them. This new-found acceptance, and plain old-fashioned materialism, have so captivated our thinking that we feel increased in goods and in need of nothing.⁶⁴

Nearly half our membership in North America are inconsistent in their church attendance on Sabbath morning. Worldliness and indifference to spiritual

things have nearly paralyzed our pastors and laity.⁶⁵

Have we not depended on our own wisdom to guide the local church boards, the conference, union, and General Conference committees? . . . Yet we are forced to admit that we are not following His counsels in health reform, dress, and almost everything else. Our churches are being filled with a constituency who eat and dress like the world and are enamored with the world's amusements.⁶⁶

In many churches today modesty has gone out of style; gold, pearls, costly garments and the fashions of the world are now the fashions of the church. Has the spirit of compromise so overwhelmed us that we do not realize we have compromised? Do we believe we are all right when we are all wrong?⁶⁷

A tidal wave of open apostasy and sin has swept through our ranks. Attacks on the church . . . have resounded through sermons, classroom lectures, and the printed page. Unscriptural divorce, Sabbathbreaking, and the misuse of funds have occurred. Institutions are operated in a manner totally out of step with inspired counsel. . . . Too many leaders, like Eli, have responded with mild admonitions, accommodating policies, and appeasement posing as redemptive love. Persons are granted leadership positions whose public statements and lifestyle patterns are completely out of step with the truth.⁶⁸

The church stands watching, confused as to which road to take. Many are moved by the direction of the majority, and so follow the majority in the broad way—the well-worn path so beautifully decorated with bright lights and attractions of the world: television, the wedding ring, jewelry, the theater, a nonvegetarian diet, and the cares of this life. Many have looked down the other road [the narrow way]. . . . Hardly anybody travels that road, they are told, just the fanatics.⁶⁹

Practices we once avoided are now condoned—some with official sanction, many more without it. We face . . . the growing acceptance of the moderate use of alcohol, increased pressure to accept “monogamous” homosexual relationships, and the swelling popularity of jewelry in all its forms. . . . The resulting pluralism of ideas and conduct is felt to be cause for celebration.⁷⁰

We Seventh-day Adventists are Sabbathkeepers, or would it be safer to say Saturday keepers? Do we really keep a holy day or is it a holiday? A day to sleep in or a day to socialize with friends, or a church potluck and Sabbath afternoon naps to prepare us for Saturday night television?⁷¹

Unfortunately, very few Seventh-day Adventists are keeping Sabbath holy. They are keeping Saturday as a holiday, not as a holy day—what a tragedy!⁷²

The Seventh-day Adventist homes were to be the model for the world. . . . But instead, most of our

homes have been contaminated by the worldly influence of television, promoting peace and prosperity but not teaching our children and youth the responsibility of being committed Seventh-day Adventist Christians.⁷³

Can we truly say that we are living in expectation of Jesus' soon coming when we look at the extravagance of our offices, churches, yes, our homes?⁷⁴

Doctrinal Apostasy

Is the doctrine of the Nicolaitans analogous to beliefs held in the church today? Have we unconsciously adopted the devil's lie that we can be saved in sin instead of from sin?⁷⁵

The evidence is overwhelming that we rejected both the experience and the practice of the everlasting gospel [1888 message], and we are still here.⁷⁶

We hear now from many of our pulpits that one cannot overcome sin, that striving to keep the Ten Commandments is legalism, that Jesus was so different from us that He took the nature of Adam before the fall. He, therefore, could keep the law perfectly, but we cannot be holy as He was holy, perfect as He was perfect.⁷⁷

[Satan's] false gospel comes weekly from many of our pulpits, and those who raise their voice against it are accused by many as divisive and fanatical.⁷⁸

A growing number of our most conscientious and intelligent church members consider the church they deeply love to be in a condition of general apostasy. The rapid growth of membership in neighboring and distant lands is small comfort to them.⁷⁹

The church has failed to address adequately the issue of righteousness by faith. Both publications and presentations upon the 1888 message of righteousness by faith have frequently shown an alarming lack of true understanding of this message.⁸⁰

To say we are not in apostasy now would be to bury our heads in the sand. God says the church is still here because of insubordination.⁸¹

Apostasy—how do we define it now? Will we continue to refuse to understand that this malignant word deals with two areas in the church's relationship to God? 1) Theology—landmarks, pillars of our faith. 2) Insubordination—disregarding God's orders concerning how His work shall be carried on to its completion.⁸² These two areas of apostasy exist in the church today.⁸³

There is great confusion in the ranks of Adventism today. Most of this confusion is in the realm of theology concerning salvation.⁸⁴

In the 1950s there was a radical shift in the theology of the remnant church, in the 1970s *The Great Controversy* position regarding the Papacy was repudi-

ated just before a massive influx of the New Theology, in the 1980s religious liberty is under attack and our beloved church uses the strong arm of the state to enforce its position, while the watching forces of Babylon marshal themselves for the last conflict.⁸⁵

How important it is, then, for us to understand the nature and the characteristics of *the great Adventist apostasy*.⁸⁶

As we understand it, the time frame of the great apostasy would be from the 1950s, when the alluring prospect of acceptance from the fallen Protestant churches, the daughters of Babylon, caused our brethren who were engaged in theological discussion with Walter Martin . . . to make some very unwise concessions.⁸⁷

"We are in the great Adventist apostasy" because the following doctrines are alleged to have been compromised: the doctrine that we receive weakness from Adam, but not guilt; the doctrine that our Lord came to earth in the human nature of fallen man; the doctrine of righteousness by faith (defined as rightdoing by means of power received from God); the doctrine of the sanctuary (because it involves putting away of sin and present atonement of Jesus); the Spirit of Prophecy (because it supports these four beliefs, defined and held as historic Adventism).⁸⁸

Ellen G. White predicts a time when "apostasy would sweep through the ranks of our ministers and our members. If we are to take Ellen White's words at their face value, that time has at least partially arrived, in that many ministers are now occupying Seventh-day Adventist pulpits who are preaching as truth the devil's great lie—that Christians cannot stop sinning even through the power of Christ. By unmistakably clear Spirit of Prophecy definition, such ministers are 'under the control of Satan.'" ⁸⁹

All this is a tragedy and has been developing into the great apostasy called the omega and now every wind of doctrine is blowing through Adventism.⁹⁰

Summary

The above citations are representative of the scores of generalizations that lace the issues of *Our Firm Foundation*. Their constant presence demonstrates an abandonment of the editorial stance taken in the first issue of volume 1: "We have pledged ourselves not to deal with personalities or call attention to specific mistakes of the past or present."

Some of the charges are inaccurate; many are half-truths; some are true at some points of time and places; but all tend to be wide generalizations, sweeping condemnations. Whatever the case, the reader who receives a steady diet of such charges and accusations—true or false—is going to lose all respect for the Adventist Church in time.

In the additional statement of mission, published in September 1988, the failures of the church were alluded to in the sympathetic statement: "That the church does not now perfectly reflect the will of our Lord is a cause for sorrow, but not for discouragement." But approximately five years later the charge is forthrightly made: "How important it is, then, for us to understand the nature and characteristics of *the great Adventist apostasy*,"⁹¹ and five alleged doctrinal compromises are spelled out. How can a member remain loyal to the SDA Church and its leadership if it is in a state of "great" apostasy?

The Use of the Writings of Ellen G. White

In addition to reprinting whole articles by Ellen G. White, series of citations from her writings appear in the editorials and articles by the editor. Other authors employ them as well, but not in the same abundance. There appears to be no deliberate attempt to misquote or to make Ellen White say something she did not say. Some may question this reader's judgment on this, but I think it to be true if one accepts their premises (as noted below).

It is soon observed that the same Ellen White citations are repeated continually through the five years of the issues examined. Second, articles are selected that hammer at the points the editors have in mind to address, so that one sees only a certain side of the total counsels. Third, the numerous small citations are cited on the assumption that because Ellen White addressed a given situation that existed in her day, the same situation must still exist in even worse form today, and therefore the quote is applicable. No allowance is made for the possibility that the church in her day responded to the reproof and changed its ways.

For example, *Testimonies*, volume 1, page 129, is repeated several times across the years (volume 1 to volume 7). In this statement Ellen White is shown Israel's murmuring in the Exodus and God's miracles in their behalf. The angel in the vision says, "Ye have done worse than they." This reproof was addressed to Sabbathkeepers in 1856, several years before these folk were organized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Although it is evident that these early believers must have made some positive, wholesome response to this reproof for the church to have come this far in its commission, it is assumed that the condition remains and if the people were bad in 1856, they are even more so today, and so a one-to-one application is made. This approach eliminates any need to look at time and place counsels to see to what they applied to then, the response made, and what may rightly be applied in principle to the church today.

It has been suggested in a recent *Ministry* article that a writer from this group misused a quote dealing with an author's royalties by applying it to the use of a member's tithe. But this group would see a principle that would be

expressed this way: If the church may not dictate how an author is to use his or her royalties, then the church may not dictate how a member is to use his or her tithe. The reasoning may not be correct, but the employment of the citation does not arise from a deliberate attempt to skew the Ellen White statement.

However, the assembling of scores of Ellen White citations in the area of reproof and correction so as to expose the declension as they see it in the church's schools, hospitals, publishing work, etc., gives the reader of the journal a sense that the independent ministry is righteous and the church is in an abject state of apostasy.

Alleged Support for the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Hope International/*Our Firm Foundation* affirms strong support for remaining loyal to the SDA Church, because it regards it as God's remnant church. But the constant assertions that the church is in an apostate condition has put a good deal of stress on their supporters. How can one support an organization that is rotten at its core and for all practical purposes is in a state of apostasy? The pressure is to separate.

But these suggestions are argued down as wrong. The solution is stressed that Ellen White has stated that the SDA Church will go through to the end, but the false members will be shaken out and the true will remain. Since they view themselves as among the "true," they should stay within the church. This theme is repeated many times. Two examples may be cited:

The Seventh-day Adventist Church will go through to the end; there will not be another. God will purify this one. All the rebels will join the ranks of the foe and tribes will come from the world to take their place. In the shaking that is to come, all false-hearted leaders, pastors, and laity will abandon the church. So many will leave that it may well destroy the visible structure of the denomination as we know it today, but true Seventh-day Adventists will continue to uphold the Lord's truth under any circumstances.⁹²

The inspired descriptions indicate that the great apostasy will be characterized by (1) changes in our theology, (2) changes in our worship, and (3) a great false revival.⁹³

Ellen White does predict a great apostasy in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which she refers to as the "shaking time." Yet the consistent theme that runs through all of these predictions is that the chaff will be blown away, and some brilliant stars will go out. . . . We search these predictions in vain for any statement that the faithful will have to leave the church. Survival tactics may be necessary.⁹⁴

The polarization that takes place in the local churches

because of controversy over this group is naturally seen by them as a fulfillment of the Ellen White prediction, and not as a wrong, divisive fruit. It is also evident of the direction that this group will have to take: separation from the SDA Church by establishing local congregations that are independent, "self-supporting," and retaining the name of Seventh-day Adventist. This is probably the reason they have reacted so strongly in *Our Firm Foundation* to the trademark issue involving John Marik in Hawaii.

Inconsistent View on Tithing

Should an Adventist give his or her tithe to the organized SDA Church of which he or she is a member and which he or she acknowledges as God's remnant church, or should it be given to an independent ministry?

As this heart-wrenching experience continues, the church member is eventually forced to recognize that Ellen White's predictions about the great Adventist apostasy are being fulfilled before his eyes. Then comes the agonizing question, "Does God require me to pay my tithe to support the great apostasy?"⁹⁵

Should a church member pay taxes to the government of which he or she is a citizen?

There are so many areas of pagan encroachment into life that we need a divine guide to help us know where to draw the line. We need a divine guide, and that is what Jesus was when He was here and some people asked: "Is it wrong to pay taxes to Caesar? The money is going to support these terrible war causes. It is going to kill people, and they are using the money to even slaughter our own people." They quoted scripture that we are not to be citizens of this world; we are to be citizens of heaven, and we need to be not of this world . . . and so on. Do we pay taxes? And Jesus made it very plain: "Yes, you pay to Caesar what is his, and you pay God what is His. Do not worry about this." And so we have a divine guide to help differentiate truth from error and fanaticism from following the Lord.⁹⁶

These two positions are inconsistent. If it is proper for an SDA Christian to pay taxes to a worldly, wicked government because he or she is a citizen of that state and receives some benefits (though he or she may be persecuted by the same state), is it not also proper for an SDA Christian to render tithes to the remnant church of which he or she is a loyal member and which is endeavoring to spread the gospel into all the world, even though he or she considers it to be in a state of apostasy? The SDA Church is certainly not as wicked as the state of Rome!

It cannot be rightly said that the total remnant church is in a total, massive state of apostasy. That is an unfair charge. The withholding of the tithes and offerings from God's ordained remnant church is only to side with Satan's

attempts to weaken it.

If the organized church is God's visible remnant church in the world today, as *Our Firm Foundation* asserts that it is, then its members are obligated under God to support it with their finances as well as with their talents and energies. It is morally indefensible to proclaim loudly wholehearted support for the SDA Church as God's remnant people and yet at the same time withhold physical support and personal support from its endeavors. But the fruit of this constant and increasing emphasis on apostasy and failure can only be divisive: members will withhold both personal and financial support from what they are told is in a "great" state of apostasy.

Hope International/Our Firm Foundation Defends Its Existence

As time has elapsed, both this independent ministry and the SDA Church have begun to react. Separation is inevitable, even if this group were to remain under the umbrella of the organization in some manner. *Our Firm Foundation* expects polarization. This pressures a member who believes *Our Firm Foundation's* line of reasoning into a difficult position: how to be loyal to the SDA Church that he/she can no longer wholeheartedly support. *Our Firm Foundation* has driven him/her to this question. This area of concern now becomes dominant in the later issues of the journal.

Why the Rise of Independent Ministries

The one main underlying reason is that some of us want to see the third angel's message go forward. For years we have been stagnant. . . . One other reason these ministries have come into being is our present backsliding as a church, and issues involved with that backsliding. This sad state of affairs has caused an independent backlash. . . . Once again, Independent Ministries are a reaction to the direction in which the church, as a whole, has been heading for the last 40 years.⁹⁷

Acknowledged Results in the Field

Even when a ministry is balanced in warning the people about error coming into the church, those who read such materials often overreact and display wrong attitudes in dealing with these errors. This reaction reflects back on the ministry who first gave the warning, which is unfortunate. At the same time, voices should be heard in every church proclaiming the truth for this time. Time is short.⁹⁸

Impossible Situation Now

It is quite evident that there are not two churches under one church name. To try to keep both sides satisfied

will eventually cause the downfall of the whole denominational structure, spiritually and physically.⁹⁹

When I say *independent* I mean independent from the control of the denomination.¹⁰⁰

The author cites the Madison situation: (1) church leadership's reluctance to support financially what was not under the direction of the conference; (2) Ellen White's counsel to the Madison leaders: "'There are those who have means, and who will give large and small sums. Have this money come direct to your destitute portion of the vineyard. The Lord has *not* specified *any regular channel* through which means should pass'" (*Spalding-Magan Collection*, p. 498)."¹⁰¹

Because of what happened, because of the great apostasy, God authorized independent self-supporting work as one of the means through which He would finish His work. Do not let anybody tell you that self-supporting work is not Seventh-day Adventist, that something that is not controlled, directed or authorized by the conference is not Seventh-day Adventist. It is. A self-supporting school can be Seventh-day Adventist, a self-supporting sanitarium can be Seventh-day Adventist, a self-supporting printing press can be Seventh-day Adventist, *and a self-supporting local congregation can be Seventh-day Adventist.*¹⁰²

Conclusion

It may be helpful if we summarize this review of the attitudes of Hope International/*Our Firm Foundation* in reverse order:

The example of Madison—selected as an example of an independent ministry functioning apart from denominational control and yet drawing on the denomination's tithe—may seem reasonable to *Our Firm Foundation* supporters, but it is based on a false premise. Madison and its leaders and the leaders of the organized church held the same doctrinal positions. They were not at odds with each other on that score at all. Dr. Kellogg's group was in apostasy, not the organized church nor the group wishing to establish Madison. Either conference or private funds could legitimately support the Madison project. Here, it was only a question of control or supervision. Hence, Ellen White could counsel Madison to seek financial support direct from the membership, if the organized church refused. If Madison had been a dissident group, we may be perfectly sure Ellen White would not have given such counsel. In the same manner the SDA Church never questions membership support of the Quiet Hour, an independent ministry.

This is the nub of the SDA Church's relationship with Hope International/*Our Firm Foundation*. It is not their calling attention to the sins and failures of the church. No true SDA—leader or laity—approves of the sins and failings that appear at times within the church body. The real

problem is that Hope International/*Our Firm Foundation* holds certain views on the human nature of Christ, the nature of sin, and sanctification. These issues have never been settled among Christians, much less among Seventh-day Adventists. They are not issues so essential to salvation that souls will be lost unless they are resolved. The problem that Hope International/*Our Firm Foundation* has created is that this independent ministry feels driven to charge the SDA Church with being in a state of apostasy because it does not accept their views on these moot theological issues. And the sins and failures of the church are seen as issuing out of this condition as well.

There is no way that the SDA Church can work with such an independent group if it cannot lay aside these positions that they have made so central to their work and mission. Furthermore, the church can hardly expect these people to pull with a church they consider in a state of "great apostasy." If they cannot accept the organized church as a mix of the wheat and tares—as it will always be—then they should separate. They cannot expect the organized church to stay in a state of divisiveness at its local levels if it is to do its task.

If to apostatize means to fall away from what Hope International/*Our Firm Foundation* holds to be the true views of the human nature of Christ, the nature of sin, and the sanctified life, then the church has not apostatized, because it has never held official views in the Fundamentals on these matters. Members have held their views privately. Arianism¹⁰³ was once held by many of our people in one form or another. It might even be called a "historic" view, because some held the view down into the 1950s. But it has never been adopted by the world church as a fundamental of the faith. It is not apostasy to repudiate such a view in the SDA Church today. Although members of the SDA Church hold differing views on the human nature of Christ, the nature of sin, and the nature of sanctification, no attempt should be made to suppress them as private views coming from private study of Scripture. But neither should these matters be raised to the level of divisive issues and charges of apostasy if the views are not held by others. These should not be made issues to divide the church any more than subjects like Armageddon, the law in Galatians, or the "daily."

By harping on these theological questions and by continually asserting the failures and sins of the church, *Our Firm Foundation* has been led away from its original intention to assist the church in its mission. Now it has become an instrument to constantly charge the church with being in a state of open apostasy. As an "accuser of the brethren," denominating the church as apostate and fallen, it has become, perhaps unwittingly, an instrument of divisiveness. In all fairness, *Our Firm Foundation* sees its critique of the Adventist Church as constructive reproof, but the

fruits of five years present a different picture in the field.

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APPENDIX VI

**“MODEL OR SUBSTITUTE?
DOES IT MATTER HOW WE SEE JESUS?”
BY NORMAN GULLEY**

***ADVENTIST REVIEW*, JANUARY 18, 25; FEBRUARY 1, 8, 15, 22, 1990**

Model or Substitute?

DOES IT MATTER HOW WE SEE JESUS?

PART 1

This article begins a series in which the author examines Christ's dual role as example and substitute. He suggests that a meeting of minds on this question can bring us together as a church. In part 1 he lays the foundation for the other segments, with a call for unity.—Editors.

Time is short. The end is at hand. "The agencies of evil are combining their forces and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones."¹

Global consciousness among the New Agers, moral consciousness among the so called born-again, and all the world wondering after the beast (Rev. 13:3)—all point to that imminent day when Satan will have "entire control of the finally impenitent."² An unholy union is forming that will climax in a death decree against God's people (verses 15-18). Satan's coming as Christ will provide the glue to hold together a world in utter rebellion against God and truth.³

The only way the remnant will survive is to be united with Christ and with fellow believers. "In our separa-

tion from one another," says Ellen White, "we are separated from Christ. We want to press together. Oh, how many times, when I have seemed to be in the presence of God and holy angels, I have heard the angel voice saying, 'Press together, press together, press together. Do not let Satan cast his hellish shadow between brethren. Press together; in unity there is strength.'"⁴ Satan is doing everything he can to cause division in the church. Divide and conquer is his timeless method. We need to pray and work for unity.

Such unity issues from a union with

Beholding Jesus

Oh, amazing grace! Who can comprehend its height, its breadth, and its depth! The mystery of sin (2 Thess. 2:7), the origin of which "will ever remain shrouded in mystery," and the mystery of godliness (1 Tim. 3:16)—that God would save mankind at such infinite sacrifice—baffle the imagination.

Nothing changes, empowers, and sends us forth to manifest Christ's life more than to study His wondrous love for a prodigal planet! This great theme will absorb our interest "throughout the whole stretch of eternity."⁷



Christ and a death to self. And the only way to be ready for the final events is to look away from self and keep a steady gaze on Jesus. We must study His life, death, and intercession, and we must do His will. That was the message of Ellen White's first vision. She saw God's people climbing up the narrow path toward heaven. "If they kept their eyes fixed on Jesus, who was just before them, leading them to the city, they were safe."⁵ Those who did not, fell to the world below—lost. It is imperative that we spend a thoughtful hour (period) each day studying the life of Christ, especially the closing moments.⁶

Pressing Together

Inspired by the nearness of the end

BY NORMAN R. GULLEY

How to Turn a World Upside Down

Satan hates the truth about Jesus. Satan knows that when we understand the truth as it is in Jesus (Eph. 4:21), then his power will be broken. The first disciples all forsook Jesus when it got rough. How could He prepare them to lead the church at Pentecost, just weeks away? He sent them to wait for the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4, 5). They would bury their differences, press together, and look up to Jesus. They spent much time gazing by faith upon Him. Thus scared cowards became mighty men who turned the world upside down! (Acts 17:6).

By beholding Christ they became changed. They did not merely learn about Jesus, but came to experience His changing presence within (see John 17:3). This is our great need today. But Satan does not care whether we know all the fundamental SDA beliefs as long as this experiential truth about Jesus can be kept from us. Think about it. Perhaps more confusion surrounds the truth about Jesus than any other we believe. For example, what human nature did He take? Was He just like us? Was He tempted as we are? While these questions circulate, Satan swiftly moves to distort, derail, and denigrate the truth about Christ. For his great controversy is against Jesus.

We need to plead for discernment, for spiritual things are spiritually discerned (1 Cor. 2:14). We need the Spirit of truth to guide us into all truth—particularly the truth about Jesus (John 16:13-15). Satan works with fiendish power to keep Him hidden from as many as he can!

The Challenge of Minneapolis Today

How well Satan succeeded in his effort to eclipse Christ for the first 40 years of Adventist history! Most Adventists of the period focused on the law rather than Christ. But then the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference session convened.⁸ And there E. J. Waggoner presented “the righteous-

ness of Christ in relation to the law,”⁹ with a balance between the two.

Ellen White drew attention to this balance following the conference. In 1890 she observed that “as a people, we have preached the law until we are as dry as the hills of Gilboa that had neither dew nor rain,” and urged that “we must preach Christ in the law.”¹⁰ No either-or here. Both are indispensable.

Many Christians today focus on Christ only, as if the law were done away. This is no better than the Christless focus on the law in the pre-1888 period within Adventism. Satan is just

Divide and conquer is

Satan's timeless method.

We need to pray and

work for unity.

as gleeful with an overemphasis in either direction. For both equally derail the truth about Jesus. Today, a century beyond Minneapolis, we need to understand the balance between two functions of Christ's ministry—substitution and example. We need to understand that He not only kept the law for us, but gave us an example in keeping the law. And we must follow in His steps.

Our greatest need today is not to know exactly what Jones and Waggoner said at the 1888 Minneapolis session. Rather, it is to know personally the One of whom they spoke. For to know Him is eternal life (John 17:3).¹¹

We can know all the right facts about the 1888 session and still not know the Saviour. Whereas the “commandments of God” (Rev. 12:17) and our unique doctrines held center stage

in evangelism from 1844 to 1888, now at the conference the “testimony of Jesus” (the other part of Revelation 12:17) took over as the central focus.

We need to enter the upper room, as those first disciples did before Pentecost, and gaze long at our Substitute-Example. Then we can draw together as they did, and through a unifying in Him go forth to turn the world upside down. At that time, “one interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up every other—Christ our righteousness.”¹²

The challenge is urgent. “Of all professing Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world.”¹³ In view of this mandate, we ourselves must first understand (by knowledge and experience) the truth about Jesus before we can proclaim it to the world. There are depths we need to know and experience before the loud cry (see Rev. 18:1-4) can reveal Christ's glory in and through us. Our most urgent need is to see Jesus in all His fullness as never before so that we can reveal Him in that fullness in the ultimate revelation to be made to the world before probation closes.

By beholding Christ, Christians “are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:18, NIV). The verb form *are being transformed* is in the present continuous tense—a process is involved. Change doesn't come to us while we're in the fast lane, but rather through a steady gaze—a preoccupation with Christ. “Christ in His self-denial, Christ in His humiliation, Christ in His purity and holiness, Christ in His matchless love—this is the subject for the soul's contemplation. It is by loving Him, copying Him, depending wholly upon Him, that you are to be transformed into His likeness.”¹⁴ What the world needs to hear and see is a people “that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12)—a people who follow the Lamb in obe-

dience, and so reveal His likeness in character (cf. verse 4).

Christ and Our Fundamental Beliefs

Jesus is to Seventh-day Adventist fundamental beliefs what the hub is to spokes in a wheel. You can perhaps get by with a bent spoke or two, but when the hub is off-center, the wheel is in jeopardy. That is our doctrinal predicament today in the church. Our greatest doctrinal need is to understand the truth as it is in Jesus—to grasp the full balanced truth about the God-man, giving place both to the fullness of His divinity and the fullness of His humanity, both to His role as example and as substitute.

For the fact is that we need Jesus both

as our substitute and as our example. What we say of Him as our substitute must not destroy our concept of Him as our example. What we say about Him as our example must not disqualify Him from being our substitute. He is neither one without the other. He is both. These two functions are as inseparable as His divine and human natures.

How important is it to develop this balance? This will become clear in subsequent articles.

Next week: How Christ differs from us.

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Model or Substitute?

DOES IT MATTER HOW WE SEE JESUS?

PART 2

In part 1 the author laid the foundation for the rest of the series by emphasizing the need to press together in our understanding of Jesus our Saviour. Here he discusses one aspect of the coming of our Lord in human flesh—His relationship to the universal infection of sin. The author documented his assertions with copious notes, which unfortunately we could not include for lack of space.—Editors.

In their assessment of the ministry of Christ, some Adventists see Him primarily as example, others primarily as substitute. These two conflicting views spring from two differing understandings of what constitutes sin. Accordingly, this issue is important for our overall study of Christ as model and substitute.

How should sin be defined? Within contemporary Seventh-day Adventist thinking, sin is variously defined as breaking the law (act); broken relationship (relationship); and corrupt nature (nature). These definitions offer different answers to the question "Is man a sinner because he sins, or does he sin because he is a sinner?" But is it possible that sin includes all three definitions? Might sinfulness (nature, broken relationship) and sins (acts) be considered as cause and effect?

Furthermore, do all sins result from the one sin of Adam? If so, in what way? Does the race share in the guilt, penalty, or culpability of Adam's sin, or only in its consequences? Are infants sinners at birth because of their inheritance from Adam? If this deprived or depraved inheritance from Adam in infants cannot properly be called sin, is it nevertheless equally in need of redemption, as are



subsequent acts of sin? And if it is in need of redemption, what does this tell us about the kind of human nature Jesus assumed and the extent of His redemptive mission?

Three Theories

Over the years three major views have come to the fore: the Pelagian, the semi-Pelagian, and the Augustinian. The Pelagian position is that Adam's sin did not affect his posterity. The semi-Pelagian view holds that Adam's sin *as guilt* is not passed on, but that his sin caused a loss of "original righteousness," which makes man unable to attain righteousness without the Spirit. The Augustinian idea is that both the effect and guilt of Adam's sin are imputed to the race. In the first two positions (Pelagian and semi-Pelagian) sin is confined to an act. In the third (Augustinian) sin includes also nature. In the first two a person is a sinner because he sins. In the third a person is a sinner, *therefore* he sins.

Original Sin in SDA History

Early Adventists considered the first

death as being a result of Adam's sin, and the second death the result of personal sin.¹ In other words, the first death is merely the consequence of—not the penalty for—Adam's sin. They believed further that Adam and Eve were created with a "middle nature," one that could become mortal or immortal, or that could become either moral or immoral. They understood this middle nature as being innocent but without character—like a blank sheet of paper yet to receive pencil markings.

Original sin, then, consisted in a loss of the middle nature, and hence the experience of mortality. This concept was worked out largely in defense of the SDA understanding of the state of the dead. Thus original sin was first studied from the perspective of the nature of man.

This approach continued until 1888. In that year, when a new emphasis on righteousness by faith emerged from the Minneapolis General Conference session, the SDA focus on original sin shifted from man's physical nature to man's spiritual nature—or as the theologians would say, from an anthropological to a soteriological emphasis. Adventists now became concerned not only with the consequences of Adam's sin—physical death—but also with the question of human depravity.

This depravity was not properly called sin, however, but was viewed as a consequence of (not a penalty for) Adam's sin.

The Biblical Picture

Space precludes anything approaching an adequate treatment of the biblical understanding of sin. The follow-

In Every Way but One

The crucial difference between us and Jesus

BY NORMAN GULLEY

ing will have to suffice.

The Bible does define sin as an act—"transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4), or "lawlessness" (NIV, RSV). In fact, there are many Hebrew and Greek words translated by the one English word *sin* that emphasize sin as an act.²

But is this all there is to sin? Is there evidence that sin has a deeper dimension—a *root system*, so to speak, supporting these acts?

Yes, there is: The Bible speaks also of sin as more than an act. We will consider references to this concept under two headings: (1) immediate roots, and (2) hereditary roots.

1. Immediate Roots

Romans 14:23 says that "everything that does not come from faith is sin" (NIV). The context concerns acting without faith. Here, the definition for sin reaches back behind the act to the motive that causes the act. This is the deeper, inner side of sin. These are "the thoughts and attitudes [literally, intentions; Greek, *ennion*] of the heart" (Heb. 4:12, NIV). Jesus said corrupt fruit comes from a corrupt tree (Matt. 12:33-35)—likewise, evil proceeds out of the human heart (mind) (Mark 7:21-23).

This is why the law has more than just some external relationship to the believer—for God said, "I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts" (Heb. 8:10, NIV; cf. 10:16). This is why Jesus spoke of the inner meaning of lawkeeping and lawbreaking (sin) as having to do with thoughts and motives, even though no external act ever takes place. Thus a lustful look is the same as committing adultery, even though it only transpires in the mind (Matt. 5:28).

2. Hereditary Roots

But Scripture penetrates even beyond the thoughts, motives, and feelings that lie behind outward acts of sin, taking account of our sinful nature or predisposition to sin. According to Scripture, in other words, we are born sinful and subject to death—prior to lawbreaking. If a baby dies a few hours or days after birth, it is still subject to the second

death—the condemnation death—even though it has never broken any commandment. If this were not so, then babies who died would not need a Saviour. Christ allowed for no such exception when He said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6, NIV).

Separation from God, or lostness, caused by Adam's sin, deprives and depraves human nature so that it is infected with sinful propensities—predisposing to inevitable acts of sin prior to the new birth. This state of sin, or sinful nature, is itself in need of salvation long before the first conscious act of sin.

The clearest Old Testament insight into hereditary roots for sin is expressed by David: "I have been . . . sinful from the time my mother conceived me" (Ps. 51:5, NIV). Note: not just sinful from birth, but from conception!

In the New Testament, the book of Romans, chapter 5, speaks clearly to the issue before us, and we find in Paul's comparison of the two Adams a clear indication of whether we are born sinful or not.

In Romans 5 Paul broadens the definition of sin: "For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous" (verse 19, NASB). Clearly Adam's sin affected the race—constituted them sinners.

But what does this mean? Did Adam merely lead the pack, or did he influence it? Put another way, did Adam's sin only begin the process of sin among mankind? Or did it actually infect the race?

Some answer this by going to verse 12: "Just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned" (NIV). On the surface this text seems to say that Adam merely began the process, and each man entered sin through his own sinning. But there is a deeper level involved. We must grasp (1) the parallelism in the passage and (2) the significance of the tense of

the verb in the clause "all sinned."

First to the parallelism. Verses 17-19 speak about the two Adams—about what they each "gifted" the race with. The whole point is that these gifts are genuine—they come apart from human works. Thus it is the obedience of Christ that constitutes a person righteous, and not his own obedience. Likewise, it is the disobedience of Adam that constitutes a person a sinner, and not merely his own acts of sin (disobedience). This is in keeping with Hebrew thought of human solidarity. Here Paul penetrates beyond mere acts as the reason for the human sin problem. He goes right to the root cause of sin: man is sinful by nature as a consequence of Adam's sin.

But why did Paul also say "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (verse 12)? The aorist tense suggests that Adam's sin is the root cause of death, and not subsequent sins. As Hodge put it: "It is not Paul's design to teach the inseparable connection between sin and death, by saying, 'As Adam sinned, and therefore died, so also all die, because all sin.' His purpose is to teach the connection between Adam's sin and the death of all men: 'It was by one man that men became sinners, and hence all men die.'"³ *The SDA Bible Commentary* agrees.⁴

It is important to realize that the comparison in this passage is between Adam and Christ (three times) and not between Adam and his posterity. Those wanting to confine sin and death to personal sinning apparently overlook this comparison.

Sinful by Nature

Ellen White concurs that man's sinfulness is rooted in Adam. For as head of the race Adam was on probation. If he had passed his probation, all would have benefited. Likewise, his failure has affected his posterity. Note the parallelism: "Adam was required to render perfect obedience to God, not only in his own behalf, *but in behalf of his posterity*. God promised him that if he would

stand the test of temptation, preserving his allegiance to the Creator during the great trial to which he would be subjected, his obedience would insure his acceptance and favor with God. He would then be forever established in holiness and happiness, and these blessings *would extend to all his posterity*. But Adam failed to bear the test. And because he revolted against God's law, *all his descendants have been sinners.*"⁵

Thus "because of sin [Adam's] posterity was born with inherent propensities of disobedience."⁶ For "when man transgressed the divine law, his nature became evil."⁷ "Thus at its very source human nature was corrupted."⁸

So if every man is born a sinner (i.e., a fallen being, separated from God—needing salvation) as the result of Adam's sin, how then could Christ enter the race through a human mother and yet be sinless? The immaculate conception of Catholicism sidesteps this question by making Mary unaffected by Adam's sin. Rather than this *immaculate conception*, it is the *miraculous conception* that is

designated by Scripture (e.g., Rom. 5).

The corporate solidarity of the human race, united to their one head, Adam, made it impossible for the salvation of the race to come from a source entirely within its limits. For no one entirely within the human setting could rise above the sin problem so deeply rooted in the human predicament of separation from God. Only One from outside the race could enter it and bring change. He must be one with us in nature, but not one with us in sin (nature or acts). These two sides were met in Christ as He took all the limitations of our humanity—save for sin.

"He for our sakes laid aside His royal robe, stepped down from the throne in heaven, and condescended to clothe His divinity with humility, and became like one of us except in sin."⁹ "He was to take His position at the head of humanity by taking the nature but not the sinfulness of man."¹⁰

As Paul expressed it, He came in the "likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3)—He did not have "sinful flesh."

Thus He neither was a sinner by nature nor a sinner by acts. He was a total Substitute.

Next week: Jesus Our Example.

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¹ Edwin H. Zachrisson, "Seventh-day Adventists and Original Sin: A Study of the Early Development of the Seventh-day Adventist Understanding of the Effect of Adam's Sin on His Posterity" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1984). I am indebted to this source for some things in this segment.

² Here are a few examples; *shagah* and *shagag* mean "error," *ta'ah* means "to err" or "wander about," *parakoe* means "to hear incorrectly," *chatha* and *harmartano* mean "missing the mark," *havar* means "to cross over" or "to pass by," with *parabaino* as the Greek equivalent.

³ Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1960), p. 148.

⁴ *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 531.

⁵ Ellen G. White manuscript 126, 1901. (Italics supplied.)

⁶ *The SDA Bible Commentary*, E. G. White Comments, vol. 5, p. 1128.

⁷ E. G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1950), p. 505.

⁸ _____, in *Review and Herald*, Apr. 16, 1901.

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Model or Substitute?

DOES IT MATTER HOW WE SEE JESUS?

PART 3

In part 2 the author showed that in regard to His birth, Christ was like us in every way but one: He was born uninfected by sin. This allowed Him to be our substitute. But then, how could He be a genuine example for us? This is the concern of the present segment. Third in a six-part series.

Throughout this series we are keeping before us that Jesus is both our substitute and example, and that He is the one in such a way that He can also be the other. We must not emphasize His role as substitute at the expense of His role as example, or vice versa. "Both attempt to say something about Jesus that needs to be said."¹

Thus far we have seen that His unique sinless human nature made it possible for Him to be our substitute. We shall see that the same unique nature qualified Him to be our example. Hebrews 4:15 says that Christ is able to "sympathize with our weaknesses" and is one who, "because of his likeness to us, has been tested every way, only without sin" (NEB).

The New Testament clearly presents Christ as our example in temptation. But the question presses: how can His temptations be like ours when His nature was unlike ours? In other

words, if He had only the likeness of sinful nature, as we said in part 2 of this series, whereas we actually have sinful nature, then wouldn't His temptations be unlike ours, for "each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed" (James 1:14)?

Clearly Jesus did not have a sinful nature;² He had no sinful passions or any taint of sin. By contrast, all the rest of us are born into the world with these liabilities. On the surface, at least, this looks like a huge advantage for Christ, and calls into question His

"You created him (and us angels) factory-imperfect," he charged. "You didn't program the computer right. Our malfunction (sin) is because of You, the Maker!"⁴ The charge was leveled at the Creator's product—sinless Adam (as well as sinless angels). It was tantamount to demanding a factory recall. That, of course, would not be possible.

Rather than created persons being recalled, the Creator became a created being. Jesus came as the second Adam—sinless, to show that Satan's charge was false. That Adam need not

ability to be our example.

These and similar issues will concern us in what follows.

Tested on Two Levels

It would seem that Ellen G. White saw Christ's mission in two dimensions. She speaks of a pre-Fall and a post-Fall dimension.

In regard to the pre-Fall dimension she says the following: "Christ came to the earth, taking humanity and standing as man's representative, to show in the controversy with Satan that man, as God created him [sinless], connected with the Father and the Son, could obey every divine requirement."³

Satan had charged God with Adam's sin.



ILLUSTRATION BY LARS JUSTINEN

Jesus Our Example

BY NORMAN R. GULLEY

have sinned. Like Adam, He had nothing sinful within to respond to Satan's temptations, but He could be tempted from an appeal to use His sinless passions and drives in an unlawful way. He withstood the tempter.

Jesus also came to show that fallen man, as corrupted by Satan, could keep the law of God. "He lived out the law. . . . By obedience to the law of God, He testified to all its immutable character, while at the same time proving that its precepts could be perfectly obeyed through His grace by every son and daughter of Adam."⁵ He came after human nature had become depraved, the image of God well-nigh obliterated. He came in "the fullness of the time," when midnight darkness smothered the world, and human bodies—temples for God—had become demon possessed, and "the earth was dark through misapprehension of God."⁶ He came to suffer temptations at this fallen level, to leave us an example. This is the other dimension of His mission.

Both dimensions of His mission must be held together—just as we must give equal attention to His substitution and example, to His divinity and humanity. Full place to each aspect must be maintained so as to understand the full truth about His temptations.

With this in mind, let us consider the temptations of Christ, and the way in which they serve as an example for us.

Satan's Strategy

Satan "knew that everything which concerned his prosperity was pending upon his success or failure in overcoming Christ with his temptations in the wilderness. He brought to bear upon Christ every artifice and force of his powerful temptations to allure him from his allegiance."⁷ Note that the thrust of Satan's temptations was to break Christ's allegiance to God, and dependence upon Him. Nowhere do inspired sources speak of Satan appealing to some fallen inclination within Jesus, for He was sinless by nature.

Everything was at stake in getting Christ to sin. "If he [Satan] failed, he

The charge was leveled at the Creator's product—sinless Adam (as well as sinless angels). It was tantamount to demanding a factory recall.

knew that he was lost. Therefore, the power of his temptations was in accordance with the greatness of the object which he would lose or gain. For 4,000 years, ever since the declaration was made to Adam that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, he had been planning his manner of attack."⁸ Satan personally came to tempt Jesus. Never had he faced one with such intense hatred. He flung every artifice and power into the fray to force Him to yield.

"Satan was on His track at every step, and in the wilderness he assailed Him with the *three leading temptations* with which man is overcome—appetite, presumption, and ambition."⁹ (See 1 John 2:16.)

Was Sinlessness an Advantage?

To appreciate the confrontation in the wilderness, we need to look at it from Christ's perspective (1) as human and (2) as divine.

1. **As human.** After nearly six weeks of fasting, Jesus the man was at the point of death. He had not been sustained supernaturally as Moses was in the mount for 40 days.¹⁰ "He was emaciated through long fasting, and felt the keenest sense of hunger. His visage was indeed marred more than the sons of men."¹¹

Because His humanity was sinless, Jesus could not experience the inner sinful urgings of sinful humans. But it was necessary that He, as our exam-

ple, experience an equivalency in intensity while remaining a sinless human.¹² For it was utterly crucial that while He descended into the depths as our example, He remain utterly unsullied as our substitute. "The length of this fast is the strongest evidence of the extent of the sinfulness and power of debased appetite upon the human family."¹³ It was "a more close and severe test than would ever be brought to bear upon man."¹⁴ He sunk to the depths of hunger.

His entire being clamored for food. To be hungry was not a sin; it was a proper desire. But through a 40-day intensification, His gnawing hunger became equivalent to the worst sinful drives ever experienced by humans. Although spotlessly sinless, Jesus can understand the inner forces of the most degraded addict. His example didn't violate His ability to be our substitute. In fact, His substitution added to the intensification of His suffering, and hence contributed to His authentic example. For "His anguish was not so much from enduring the pangs of hunger as from His sense of the fearful result of the indulgence of appetite and passion upon the race."¹⁵

In the wilderness "the weight of the sins of the world was pressing His soul, and His countenance expressed unutterable sorrow, a depth of anguish that fallen man had never realized. He felt the overwhelming tide of woe that deluged the world. He realized the strength of indulged appetite and of unholy passion that controlled the world."¹⁶ As the sin-bearer "He humiliated Himself to the lowest depths of human woe, that He might be qualified to reach man, and bring him up from the degradation in which sin had plunged him."¹⁷

Those sins devastated His frail humanity! How could one man, even a sinless man, bear the weight of a world's sin? There is mystery here that must be understood without violating His example. To a degree, perhaps inexplicable this side of eternity, His substitution necessitated His divinity, not just to have His sacrifice acceptable, but even to bear the

sins of the world. Is this what Ellen White meant when she said: "Christ's humanity alone could never have endured this test [in the wilderness], but His divine power combined with humanity gained in behalf of man an infinite victory"?¹⁸ He did it, not for Himself, but for mankind.

2. As divine. Having looked at Christ's temptations from the perspective of His sinless humanity, we now come to consider them from the perspective of His inherent divinity. There was one peculiar inclination with which Christ needed to wrestle in the wilderness—not from the standpoint of His humanity, but from that of His divinity: "It was a difficult task for the Prince of Life to carry out the plan which He had undertaken for the salvation of man, in clothing His divinity with humanity. He had received honor in the heavenly courts, and was familiar with *absolute power*. It was as difficult for Him to keep the level of humanity as it is for men to rise above the low level of their depraved natures, and be partakers of the divine nature."

"Christ was put to the closest test, requiring the strength of all His faculties to resist the inclination when in danger, to use His power to deliver Himself from peril, and triumph over the power of the prince of darkness."¹⁹

Can we understand His supreme struggle? Never! But we must try to grasp its depths. He had exercised absolute power from eternity! This power He had by nature; it was inherent. If we grumble about our inheritance by nature, think of His. If we say we have habits that bind us, think of His—a habit with eternal use back of it! Can you get any greater urge than that? Our habits, measured by His, are but drops of water compared to a shoreless sea. He knows the human struggle in temptations because His were infinitely greater, and precisely because of His unique divine nature rather than from an identical human nature.

A Much Greater Trial

So Christ had a struggle from the

human and the divine within Him. The human became so emaciated and stressed out, through a nearly six-week fast, that His consuming passion to eat became equivalent to sinful passions of men. But that's not all. Add to this breaking load the total sins of the world, the crushing guilt of a planet placed on Him. What an inexplicable intensification this staggering load brought to the agonizing struggle of the emaciated One!

In view of this unparalleled experience,

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rience, can anyone question the genuineness of His example? No! His temptations were infinitely harder than man's! No other human could bear that load. The lost will bear only their own sins at the millennium's close. He bore the load for everyone.²⁰

So Christ's mission involved substitution as well as example. Man desperately needed both if he would be rescued and fitted for heaven. One without the other would constitute an incomplete salvation. "It was demonstrated before the universe that, apart

from God, humanity could not be uplifted. A new element of life and power must be imparted by Him who made the world."²¹

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¹ Norman Gulley, in *Adventist Review*, June 30, 1983, p. 4. The "holiness of God and the helplessness of fallen man are held together in Jesus Christ. He was not only one without the other. He was both (*ibid.*, p. 7). Steve Wallace (in "Our Sinless Yet Sympathetic Saviour," American Cassette Ministries) has developed this holistic view, presenting some insights that have been helpful to me.

² He had the "innocent infirmities" of men, but not man's sin. That is, He was deprived but not depraved.

³ *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 253.

⁴ See *The Great Controversy*, page 670, for similar sentiments.

⁵ E. G. White, in *Signs of the Times*, Mar. 14, 1895, p. 190.

⁶ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 22 (see also pp. 22-38).

⁷ E. G. White, in *Review and Herald*, Mar. 3, 1874, p. 143.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Mar. 18, 1875, p. 160.

⁹ *Ibid.*, July 5, 1892, p. 580.

¹⁰ Moses "was especially sustained by the glory of God which enshrouded him" (*ibid.*, July 28, 1874, p. 143).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Aug. 4, 1874, p. 144.

¹² I am indebted to Stephen Wallace for this insight.

¹³ E. G. White, in *Review and Herald*, Aug. 4, 1874, p. 144.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Sept. 1, 1874, p. 151.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Aug. 4, 1874, p. 144.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, July 28, 1874, p. 143.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Oct. 13, 1874, p. 153. This needs to be balanced, and considered along with, statements on the *kenosis*, or emptying (see Phil. 2:5-8), in which Christ laid aside the use of His divine attributes, while remaining divine, saving us as a man.

In reference to this EGW quote, E. C. Webster (*Crossroads in Adventist Christology*, Th.D. thesis, Peter Lang, New York, 1984, pp. 78-88) believes Christ had a functioning divinity, whereas W. W. Whidden, II (*The Soteriology of Ellen G. White: The Present Path to Perfection, 1836-1902*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1989, pp. 172-176) believes this was an exception to her usual focus on the non-use of His divinity. It would seem to this author that Christ is portrayed in inspired sources as both a dependent man—as our example, and as using His own divine attributes—as our substitute (cf. John 5:30; 14:10 with John 10:25; 15:24, 25; cf. DA 151, 336, 368 with DA 365, 387, 406). Though He never used His divine powers for Himself (DA 119), He could use His own divine powers for others when He acted as substitute and not as example. Two of these being when (1) He, as God, forgave sin and when (2) He bore the sins of the world—two contributions no other human could make.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Apr. 1, 1875, p. 161. (Italics supplied.)

²⁰ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 129.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 37. According to the *kenosis* of Philipians 2:5-8, Christ, in His incarnation, laid aside the use of His divine prerogatives, while remaining divine. Just as His own divinity could have withstood the advances of death (*Ibid.*, p. 484), so it could have aided Him throughout His life. But as our example, He lived as any other human must—relying upon divine power whose source is beyond man, rather than upon His own innate divinity.

Next Week: Jesus Our Substitute



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Model or Substitute?

DOES IT MATTER HOW WE SEE JESUS?

PART 4

In the previous segment, the author showed how Christ could be our example while being sinless from His birth. Here, in a change of focus, he discusses Jesus in His role as substitute. Fourth in a six-part series.

Christ's was a sinless sacrifice—it had to be, as prefigured in type. Sin, whether in His nature or in act, would have disqualified Him from being our substitute. For He would have needed a substitute Himself.

At Calvary we find the greatest revelation of Christ as both substitute and example. In submission as man to God, He is our example; but in *saving men as God*, He is our substitute. Note how His example transcends anything we can duplicate, extending as it does to His substitution. As all of us might do, "He submitted, but, oh! He felt the bitterness as no other being could feel it."¹

It was here at the cross that He ultimately bore our sins. He became sin for us—vicariously, in *mission at death* rather than in *nature at birth*. "Every truth in the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary."² This statement from Ellen G. White places emphasis on the climax of Christ's mission above every other phase of His life. It is the cross that opened the eyes of the universe, and forever holds our commitment to God.³ In fact, throughout eternity "both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song."⁴

Nowhere do inspired sources make the birth of Christ as prominent as His death. Just look at the space given in



the Gospels to the last week of Christ's life, compared with the space given to His birth. In fact, the Gospels devote about a third of their space to the Passion Week. Should not those who are preoccupied with His birth take pause and look beyond to the cross? For throughout unnumbered worlds and through unending time the study of Christ will be cross-centered.

Sin for Us

At the cross "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us" (2 Cor. 5:21, NIV). Christ carried the only credentials to become man's sinless sacrificial substitute. Sinless in nature, sinless in life—both were demanded by the law. For man owed a great debt—a debt he could not pay himself. He needed a substitute—a human substitute, a *sinless* human substitute. So God became a man, and as man, Christ paid the debt in full.

Only man could die, so Jesus had to become human. But His death could redeem the planet only because He

was also divine. Through His infinite suffering He provided an example for man, and through His infinite sacrifice He provided substitution.

Some believe that Jesus had to be exactly like us in fallen nature in order to span the gulf gouged out by sin. Yet even that identity has a qualification—for none other comes into the world "born of God." If we must credit His humanity as being like ours through Mary, we must not overlook the fact that His humanity has a divine root, too—He was born of the Holy Spirit, as well as through Mary.

Vicariously He bore the sins of the world. As the Sin-bearer, the sacrificial Lamb, "He took upon His sinless nature our sinful nature."⁵ "On Calvary's cross the weight of the sins of the world rested upon His soul. He received in His bosom the arrow of lost humanity."⁶ "The gulf that was made by sin has been spanned by the cross of Calvary."⁷ So He didn't completely bridge the abyss between God and man in His nature at birth, but He did in His mission at death.

In the wilderness Israel suffered the serpent's deadly sting. Their only hope was to look upon the brazen serpent uplifted before them. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so was the Son of man 'lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life' (John 3:14, 15)"⁸ "As the image made in the likeness of the destroying serpents was lifted up for their healing, so One made 'in the likeness of sinful flesh' was to be their Redeemer (Rom. 8:3)."⁹

A serpent—what a strange symbol for Christ! This is the symbol for Satan

Jesus Our Substitute

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(Rev. 12:9)!¹⁰ Why would there be this only occurrence in Scripture where Christ, usually symbolized as a lamb or a lion,¹¹ is portrayed with the symbol of Satan? The reason is that on Calvary Jesus became identified with Satan's kingdom—for there "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us" (2 Cor. 5:21, NIV). No wonder He cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46, NIV).

Just as that brazen serpent only looked like a serpent, so the sinless Jesus only took the "likeness of sinful flesh."

Christ's Greatest Struggle

Christ's sin-bearing began in Gethsemane. For in Gethsemane He, for the first time, suffered "under divine justice." Always an intercessor for others, He now "longed to have an intercessor for Himself." He felt a break in His accustomed unity with the Father, and "He feared that in His human nature He would be unable to endure the coming conflict with the powers of darkness."¹² In graphic language Mrs. White describes "the last fearful struggle": "Christ's soul was filled with dread of separation from God. Satan told Him that if He became the surety for a sinful world, the separation would be eternal. He would be identified with Satan's kingdom, and would nevermore be one with God. . . . *Terrible was the temptation* to let the human race bear the consequences of its own guilt, while He stood innocent before God."¹³

Christ's anguish was so intense that His face was changed, and bloody sweat poured from it. It was as if the emaciation that took 40 days in the wilderness was intensified a hundredfold to more swiftly mar His face in Gethsemane. He "was seized with superhuman agony."¹⁴ "His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men" (Isa. 52:14). Jesus "fell prostrate, overcome by the horror of a great darkness."¹⁵

Three times the test came in the wilderness, and three times in Gethsemane. The wilderness temptations sought to

separate Jesus from His Father, to drive Him to depend on His own divinity. The temptations in Gethsemane thrust Jesus into an eternal separation from God that mankind plunges into at the second death. From within the depths of this abyss, eternal separation from His Father engulfed Him. "Christ might even now refuse to drink the cup apportioned to guilty man. It was not yet too late. He might wipe the bloody sweat from His brow, and leave man to perish in his iniquity."¹⁶

Here was temptation at its strongest: to return to be with His Father and let the world go to ruin, rather than plunge into oblivion at the risk of never living again. His struggle was infinitely greater than any temptation we shall ever have.

Jesus faced the prospect of giving up the most precious One He had loved from eternity (cf. Ps. 93:2; 1 John 4:16). Offering to give up heaven, Moses asked God to forgive Israel's sin or "blot me . . . out of thy book" (Ex. 32:32). But Moses had never lived in heaven—let alone with the Father from eternity! Jesus had.

We simply do not have the ability to imagine the depths of this struggle. It had all the power of perfect love back of it. It had all the pull of an eternity behind it. It had all the future of eternity drawing it. It was precisely this longing to go home to His Father, and thus be free from this revolting world of sin, that made His whole life of temptations so hard to endure. Oh, how He forever longed for the homecoming!

Beyond Moral Influence

His mission term on this rebel planet was for Him a long lifetime, with no furloughs! And now it looked as though the prospect of returning—the longing of His whole human life—was about to be snuffed out forever. In sheer faith, with no visible evidence to substantiate it, Jesus trusted His Father for the outcome. What an example! And He plunged into the abyss with no clear assurance of ever coming out. He died the

final separation death from God's judgment—in our place. What a substitute!

This was no mere moral influence to change human perception of God, that we might appreciate Him. This was the horror of plunging into eternal separation from God! Jesus knew that God, who forgives *sinners*, never forgives *sin*. But Jesus offered to pay the price.

God is best revealed at the cross. But infinitely more is involved than just revelation. This is redemption! It is substitution! Here is the climax of a lifelong mission as our substitute, that necessitates our understanding of sin as far more than act, and Calvary as far more than a demonstration.

The utter depths of the human predicament faced Him. He came into the planet unlike any other (without sin) and at His death exited unlike any other (suffering the ultimate divine punishment for sin). These two perspectives save us from a superficial view of His death. They show us that as our *example* in submission to God, He became, in the final, ultimate sense, our *substitute*. At Calvary, as in all His life, He was not one without the other. He was both.

Hallelujah! What a Saviour! 

Next Week: Jesus Our Advocate

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- ² *Gospel Workers*, p. 315.
- ³ See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 761; White, in *Review and Herald*, July 12, 1892.
- ⁴ *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 19, 20.
- ⁵ *Medical Ministry*, p. 181.
- ⁶ White, in *Review and Herald*, July 12, 1892.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, July 1, 1890.
- ⁸ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 431; cf. pp. 475, 476.
- ⁹ *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 174, 175.
- ¹⁰ Cf. Gen. 3:1 with Eze. 28:11-19.
- ¹¹ Jesus is the Lamb (e.g., Rev. 5:12), and the "Lion of the tribe of Juda" (verse 5). Satan is also depicted as a lion—a "roaring lion, [walking] about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).
- ¹² *The Desire of Ages*, p. 686.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 687, 688. (Italics supplied.)
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 689.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 690.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*



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Model or Substitute?

DOES IT MATTER HOW WE SEE JESUS?

PART 5

In part 4 the author presented Jesus in His role as substitute, showing the centrality of the cross in the salvation process. Here he focuses on Jesus in His high-priestly role. Fifth in a six-part series.

Many Christians do not look beyond the cross. Seventh-day Adventists, however, look to Christ's present intercession in the heavenly sanctuary as of great importance. Says Ellen White: "The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven."¹ In their teaching on the sanctuary, Adventists make a unique contribution to Christian doctrine.

Need for Balance

In presenting this doctrine, however, we need balance—balance between the fact of a completed sacrifice at Calvary (Heb. 9:12),² on the one hand, and, on the other, Christ's continuing work in heaven for us (Heb. 5:10; 6:20; 7:21; 8:1; 9:25).

The payment for sin is complete, but the saving of sinners is not concluded. Calvary is our title to heaven,

but character is our fitness for heaven. This fitness has two dimensions: what is happening in *humanity*—in our minds and hearts (Heb. 4:12; 8:10; 10:16)—and what is happening in *heaven*. In human hearts the thoughts and feelings are being brought into captivity to Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 10:5); in heaven Christ proffers in our behalf His infinite righteousness, for even our best efforts of obedience fall far short of meeting the infinite standard of the law. In human hearts Christ is the perfecting presence in us; in heaven He is the prevailing priest for us. But

had begun. The broken relationship with God and corrupted human nature cried out for a new element from the Creator, a new power to do in and for us what we could never do for ourselves.

But all the work the Spirit does in human hearts (1 Peter 1:2) has its basis in the life and death of Christ. What Christ accomplished for us at Calvary He applies to us today. "The cross must occupy the central place because it is the means of man's atonement."⁴ The wedding garment we must wear (Matt. 22:8-14), the robe of righteousness we must have to cover our na-

both are possible because of the finished work at the cross.

Christ's Work in Human Hearts

It is crucial to grasp our utter undone condition through the Fall. Because man chose to disobey God in Eden, he lost the ability to obey. In fact, during the years prior to Christ's coming, "it was demonstrated before the universe that, apart from God, humanity could not be uplifted. A new element of life and power must be imparted by Him who made the world."³

Man needed a life transfusion. Although he had not died immediately in Eden as the wages of his sin, yet the dying process



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ILLUSTRATION BY LARS JUSTINEN

kedness (Isa. 61:10; Rev. 3:18; cf. Gen. 3:21; Rev. 6:11), is the faultless character of Christ—a character equivalent to that of sinless Adam before the Fall. The Second Adam won back what the first had lost.

We need to ponder this carefully, and continue the crucial balance we have kept in mind throughout the series. Clearly man is still corrupt, in spite of Christ's life and death. And this corruption in nature continues until the Second Advent (see 1 Cor. 15:52-54). Yet "the seal of the living God will be placed upon those only who bear a likeness to Christ in character."⁵ We must become Christ-like in character while still possessing our corruptible nature. This process involves abiding in Christ (John 15:1-5), partaking of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), and having the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23).

Those who love and obey God (John 14:15), groaning inwardly as they "wait eagerly" for the redemption of their bodies (Rom. 8:23);* those who have the Spirit "as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come" (2 Cor. 1:22; cf. 2 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 1:13, 14)—it is precisely these very ones who must be most watchful of inbred corruption ready to rob them of their eternal future. These opposites within give reality to the Christian warfare.

But this goes far deeper than mere acts. Perfection of character is of highest priority for us. Just as sin is more than an act, so character perfection penetrates to a much deeper level than our outward acts. "Even your thoughts must be brought into subjection to the will of God and your feelings under the control of reason and religion . . . If the thoughts are wrong the feelings will be wrong, and the thoughts and feelings combined make up the moral character."⁶

For "God's law reaches to the feelings and motives as well as the outward acts. It reveals the secrets of the heart, flashing light upon things be-

fore buried in darkness. God knows every thought, every purpose, every plan, every motive. The books of heaven record the sins that would have been committed had there been opportunity. God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing. By His law He measures the character of every man."⁷

Paul speaks against this background when he says: "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been

*We cannot get rid of our
corruptible nature, but
we must do something
about our character.*

made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me" (Phil. 3:12).

The book of Hebrews gives insight into Christ's present intercession, emphasizing at the same time His work on the human mind (thoughts) and heart (feelings). It shows that His Word penetrates to "the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Heb. 4:12), and that He writes His laws in our "minds" and "hearts" (Heb. 8:10; also Heb. 10:16). With Christ inscribing the law on human thoughts and feelings, the two foci that constitute moral character, one would expect perfect obedience to follow.

But does it? What does it mean that the saints "obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus" (Rev. 14:12)? We explore this question briefly in the following section.

Christ's Work in Heaven

Christians never obey as did the per-

fect Adam.⁸ Even "the religious services, the prayers, the praise, [and] the penitent confession . . . passing through the corrupt channels of humanity . . . are so defiled that unless purified by blood, they can never be of value with God. . . . Unless the Intercessor [Christ] who is at God's right hand presents and purifies all by His righteousness, it is not acceptable to God. . . . Everything in obedience, in penitence, [and] in praise and thanksgiving must be placed upon the glowing fire of the righteousness of Christ."⁹ Even our best works of obedience and worship are tainted by our corruption.

So it is only "through the obedience of the one man [Jesus] the many will be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19). It is not our own obedience, but Christ's obedience, that makes us righteous. Although we can never go to heaven unless we obey, it is equally true that we could never get to heaven unless we receive the obedience of Christ. This is because of the carnal nature, which taints even our best works.

Hence the utter imperative of His intercession. Says Ellen White: "It is as necessary that He should keep us by His intercessions as that He should redeem us with His blood."¹⁰ "The intercession of Christ is a golden chain fastened to the throne of God. He has turned the merit of His sacrifice into prayer."¹¹

So Calvary is the basis of His intercession. "He places the whole virtue of His righteousness on the side of the suppliant. Christ pleads for man, and man, in need of divine help, pleads for himself in the presence of God, using the power of the influence of the One who gave His life for the world."¹²

Zechariah 3 gives some insight into the end-time church and its need of Christ's intercession. "As Joshua pleaded before the Angel, so the remnant church, with brokenness of heart and unfaltering faith, will plead for pardon and deliverance through Jesus, their Advocate. They are fully conscious of the sinfulness of their lives,

they see their weakness and unworthiness; and they are ready to despair.”¹³

Fully aware of their sins, they remember their Saviour. “The divine Advocate pleads in their behalf. . . . ‘The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan. I gave My life for these souls. They are graven upon the palms of My hands. They may have imperfections of character; they may have failed in their endeavors; but they have repented.’ ”¹⁴ Christ then clothes them in His own righteousness.

Christ's Intercessory Prayer

We get a glimpse into the nature of Christ's intercession in His great high-priestly prayer in John 17. Especially relevant to this study is His deep concern for unity among His people: “Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one” (verse 11; cf. verses 21-23).

Christ longs for His church to be one as He is with the Father: “I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one” (verse 22). What is this glory? Might character be a part of it? Being changed, becoming like Jesus, *reflecting His character*—this is the only way to be fitted for heaven. We cannot get rid of our corruptible nature, but we must do something about our character. For the corruptible will be changed at the Second Advent, but the character must be changed now while Christ still intercedes. When He stands up (Dan. 12:1) and pronounces the irrevocable decree that the righteous will remain righteous and the unrighteous remain unrighteous (Rev. 22:11), it will then be forever too late to change.

Soon, during the loud cry, the revelation of Christ's glorious character in His people will be made manifest to the ends of the earth (see Rev. 18). The universe will at last take notice of those who give glory to Him (see Rev. 14:7). As final events quicken their pace, can we not hear Jesus cry out, “Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son” (John 17:1)? And God will do it—through

Christ's followers. Oh, what a challenge! Our finest hour is just ahead. We have come to the kingdom for such a time as this—to glorify Him.

As never before we should have a steady gaze on the One with whom we will spend eternity. “Our chief danger is in having the mind diverted from Christ.”¹⁵ Look away to Him. Take a long, steady gaze at the God-man—indivisibly both substitute and example—in His saving work as sacrifice and intercessor. He died as our substitute and example. He intercedes as our substitute and example.

His substitutionary role—in death and intercession—emphasizes our utter need of Him as we seek to follow His example. Like the lost sheep of Luke 15:4-6, we need to be carried all the way home by the Shepherd, for even in following His example we need His substitution all the way. The fact is, we need His substitutionary intercession as much as we need His substitutionary sacrifice. 

Next week: Jesus Our Hiding Place

^aBible texts in this article are taken from the New International Version.

REFERENCES

- ¹ *The Great Controversy*, p. 489.
- ² Also see Hebrews 7:27 and 10:10, where the Greek word *ephapax* means “once for all,” not needing to be repeated.
- ³ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 37.
- ⁴ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 236. Atonement is a process that spans the work of Christ on behalf of mankind, and the cross is the central place in that process.
- ⁵ *The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 7, p. 970.
- ⁶ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 310.
- ⁷ *The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 5, p. 1085.
- ⁸ Adam in his perfection did not have a corrupt nature warring against his spiritual nature. He did not have the inner battle. We have this problem and can obey only through divine help.
- ⁹ *The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 6, p. 1078.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 914.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 1078.
- ¹³ *Prophets and Kings*, p. 588; cf. pp. 582-592.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 589.
- ¹⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 357.



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Model or Substitute?

DOES IT MATTER HOW WE SEE JESUS?

PART 6

In part 5 the author presented Jesus as our prevailing priest in heaven. Here he presents Him as our refuge in the coming crisis, the one who abides with us until the very end of time. This concludes the series.

The tragedy of Noah's day was that carpenters who spent much time working *inside* the ark when it wasn't raining found themselves *outside* when it was!

They had heard about the coming flood, but were unprepared for it. In fact, after Noah and his family entered the ark of safety, all evidence suggested to those outside that it was life as usual. And as the days passed, they believed themselves far wiser than the deluded people inside! That is, until the rains began to fall. It was then that they started banging at the vessel's door, screaming to be let in. "We are your workmen, Noah," they cried out. "Let us in! And hurry!"

Can you imagine how Noah must have felt? He had preached his heart out to everyone, especially to the workmen. But they wouldn't listen when they had the opportunity. Now it was too late! The door was shut forever.

Is it possible to be inside God's church today, building it up as His workmen, only to find ourselves outside and with-



out shelter in the coming storm?

The Coming Storm

"A storm is gathering, ready to burst upon the earth, and when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there will be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture."¹ "A storm is arising that will wrench and test the spiritual foundation of every one to the utmost. Therefore avoid the sand bed; hunt for the rock. Dig deep; lay your foundation sure. Build, oh, build for eternity! Build with tears, with heartfelt prayers. Let every one of you from henceforth make your life beautiful by good works."²

Solemn words indeed! Who is able? Who can measure up? Who will be saved? In the time of Noah, only eight chose the safety of the ark. How many today are entering God's modern ark?

It is essential that we not lose sight of Christ and His infinite love as we focus on the subject of final events. Too many people see end events as crisis-centered, rather than Christ-centered. Too many focus entirely on what is coming, rather than primarily upon *who* is coming. We must remember that the angel announcing the hour of God's judgment also carries the everlasting gospel (Rev. 14:7). We are safe only when we study the judgment, or events before us, in the context of God's

unchanging gospel of good news. We need the assurance that even when final events, viewed by themselves, appear to be against us, Christ is eternally for us.

"Every truth in the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary,"³ says Ellen G. White. This statement must also apply to final events—for *Calvary is the final event!*

"It is finished," Jesus proclaimed at Calvary (John 19:30).^{*} And even though terrifying skirmishes continue, the war was actually won there at the cross. The

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cross tells us in clarion certainty that Satan is already a defeated foe and that Christ will conquer in the coming storm. Christ did not go through all that dread agony for us at Calvary only to stand idly by while we slip through His fingers in the coming crisis.

He has lost none of His power. We may, therefore, approach the future with confidence in the irreversibility and finality of His resurrection victory. In a sense, we travel not only *to* a future goal; but *from* the goal already reached at Calvary. The outcome is inevitable if we abide in that “ark” of safety that God provides—in Christ.

God's Modern Ark

Ellen White points to Isaiah 26:20, Psalm 50:1-6, and Psalm 91 (among others) as key passages describing our present-day ark.⁴ She speaks of standing “under the broad shield of Omnipotence.”⁵ “Go, my people, enter your rooms and shut the doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until his wrath has passed by. See, the Lord is coming out of his dwelling to punish the people of the earth for their sins” (Isa. 26:20, 21). “Gather to me my consecrated ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice” (Ps. 50:5).

“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.’ Surely he will save you. . . . You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day. . . . A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. . . . If you make the Most High your dwelling—even the Lord, who is my refuge—then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways” (Ps. 91:1-11).

Jesus alone is our ark of safety for the coming storm. It is not our good works—though we proclaim the final message to the world (Rev. 18:1-4). It is not what

we know—though we must be ready to give answer for our faith (1 Peter 3:15). It is not even our character formation—though this is absolutely essential. Our only ark is Jesus Christ.

The coming storm is beyond anything we have ever imagined or experienced. The entire world will be against God’s remnant (Rev. 13). This will be a time of trouble unknown in history (Dan. 12:1).⁶ The winds of strife will be unleashed (Rev. 7:1-4), the seven last plagues will devastate the planet (Rev. 16), and the “earth will be convulsed; everywhere there will be dreadful earthquakes and eruptions.”⁷

truth about Jesus from everyone.

The bridegroom longs to come closer than ever to his bride during the wedding day. The church is the bride of Christ, and the marriage is just ahead. Christ longs to place a covering—His robe of righteousness—over His bride, to protect her in the coming days, just before He whisks her off the planet to their wedding reception and a 1,000-year honeymoon in heaven.

Those who get into the ark will ride out the storm and come through triumphant. But how do we get in?

This has everything to do with the sealing. Today angels hold “the four

*Too many people see end events as crisis-centered,
rather than Christ-centered. Too many focus on what
is coming rather than upon who is coming.*

Satan knows the prophecies. He knows a storm is coming. He knows that time is short. And he has but one aim: to keep as many out of the ark as possible, so they will be lost. In this way he seeks to hurt Christ. He almost took the whole world the first time, at the Flood. Now he works to do even better this time around.

So what is his strategy? Ellen White wrote in 1851: “Satan is now using every device in this sealing time to keep the minds of God’s people from the present truth and to cause them to waver.” And notice why: “I saw a covering that God was drawing over His people to protect them in the time of trouble; and every soul that was decided on the truth and was pure in heart was to be covered with the covering of the Almighty.”⁸ The truth as it is in Jesus—this is what Satan hates, and works to hide from us. To be in the modern ark means to know the truth about Christ, to know Him and to abide in Him (see John 17:3). No wonder Satan works desperately to hide the

winds” of strife till the “144,000” are sealed (Rev. 7:1-4). That’s how we get in. We must be sealed.

But what is this sealing? Says Ellen White: It is “a settling into the truth, both *intellectually* and *spiritually*, so they cannot be moved.”⁹ The seal has to do, therefore, with knowing truth in the mind and in the heart—in our thoughts, our feelings, our character. This suggests a balance between knowledge and experience. It involves knowing the truth about Jesus to the degree that we become like Him. “Those who receive the seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully.”¹⁰ No wonder that “only those who receive the seal of the living God will have the passport through the gates of the Holy City.”¹¹

And this is the way that all people get into the ark—not just an optional extra reserved for a few “elite” Christians. By beholding Jesus we become like Him (2 Cor. 3:18). Those who thus behold Him

will live triumphant on earth after His intercession in heaven is over, when the sanctuary door will be as tightly shut as was that of Noah's ark!

Time is running out. Laodicea believes she does "not need a thing" (Rev. 3:17). Even the wise virgins are dozing off (Matt. 25:5). "I saw," said Ellen White, "that many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were looking to the time of 'refreshing' and the 'latter rain' to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord and to live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation; therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God."¹²

It will be too late to wait for the latter rain to prepare one to enter the ark. Now is the time to be pure in heart. Now is the time to be a peacemaker, true sons and daughters of God. And now is the time to hunger and thirst after righteousness so that we can be filled with God's Spirit. Such purity, such unity, such hunger comes from Christ. As never before, we need to abide daily in Him, as branches abiding in a vine (John 15:1-7)—resting in Him, communing with Him, talking of Him, walking together with Him.

If our dependence upon Christ is to be as strong and vital as described, then what is all this talk about having to live in the end-time without Jesus as our mediator, and with His Spirit withdrawn from the world? I find many Seventh-day Adventists still unclear on these questions. Some believe that we must be good enough to go it alone in the coming time of storm. No wonder some despair—for if they cannot make it now, how then during the worst time ever?

Living Without a Mediator

Living without a mediator does not mean living without Christ. True, His intercession will have finished in heaven—but so has His death on Calvary. Has a finished work at Calvary taken Him from us? Why then the other? The fact that He completes something for us does not mean

that He has forsaken us. Quite the contrary. His guarantee is forever reliable: "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Heb. 13:5). "I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

Notice, He does not say, "I will be with you *till the time of trouble*, then you will be on your own." Nor does He somehow charge up our spiritual batteries to some sort of maximum that pulls us through the great time of trouble. No, He

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cannot be moved."*

simply promises that He will be with us all the way. For it will still be true—and particularly then—that "apart from [Him we] can do nothing" (John 15:5).

So what does it mean to live "without a mediator" when the "Spirit is withdrawn from the world"? Again, balance is important. When we come to the time when mediation in heaven will have finished, there will still be mediation on earth, so to speak. Christ will have completed His work of defense for us in heaven's court, but He will continue defending us on earth. He will still stand among those flung into the final fiery furnace. His Spirit will have been withdrawn from the world—from those who throw His people into their final ordeal—but never will His Spirit withdraw from His people. The Pentecostal outpouring of the latter rain represents God's heavenly power and presence with His people in their hour of need.

And it is precisely here that we need to hold together the fact that Jesus is both our substitute and our example—that He is the one without jeopardizing His ability to be the other. Forsaken by God, the Sin-bearer plunged into that ultimate and awful loneliness for us.¹³ He died in our place so that we do not have to go through that separation from God, which is the second death. Never will the saints be alone in the time of trouble, as He was at Calvary; for He never calls us to follow His example in the sphere of substitution.¹⁴ *He will be our hiding place.*

(Concluded)

*Bible texts in this article are from the New International Version.

REFERENCES

- ¹ *Evangelism*, p. 704.
- ² *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 129, 130.
- ³ *Gospel Workers*, p. 315.
- ⁴ See *Education*, pp. 181-183; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 110; *Prophets and Kings*, p. 538; and *The Great Controversy*, pp. 630-634.
- ⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 120.
- ⁶ We need to understand Matthew 24:21 in view of Daniel 12:1. Matthew says: "For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again." This is the 1260-year period (538-1798); whereas the great time of trouble (Dan. 12:1) is from probation's close to just before the Second Advent. How can both be the worst time ever? The 1260-year period is the worst in duration and the future time of trouble is the worst in intensity.
- ⁷ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 110.
- ⁸ *Early Writings*, p. 43.
- ⁹ *The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 4, p. 1161. (Italics supplied.)
- ¹⁰ *Early Writings*, p. 71.
- ¹¹ *The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 7, p. 970.
- ¹² *Early Writings*, p. 71.
- ¹³ Christ cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46), but He also said, just before dying, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46). From the Father's perspective, He had not forsaken Christ, but had withdrawn from the sins of the world laid upon Him. From Christ's perspective, the reality of the separation was unspeakably terrible. "The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 753).
- ¹⁴ We will triumph through that time, as He did through His time of trouble, by resting in the power and presence of God. In this sense He is our example in the great time of trouble.



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APPENDIX VII

**“FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS OF
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS”
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH MANUAL
REVISED 1990**

CHAPTER 2

Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists

Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. These beliefs, as set forth here, constitute the church's understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture. Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God's Holy Word.

1. *The Holy Scriptures*

The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to man the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history. (2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Ps. 119:105; Prov. 30:5, 6; Isa. 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12.)

2. *The Trinity*

There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation. (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 14:7.)

3. *The Father*

God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also revelations of the Father. (Gen. 1:1; Rev. 4:11; 1 Cor. 15:28; John 3:16; 1 John 4:8; 1 Tim. 1:17; Ex. 34:6, 7; John 14:9.)

4. The Son

God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly man, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God's power and was attested as God's promised Messiah. He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things. (John 1:1-3, 14; Col. 1:15-19; John 10:30; 14:9; Rom. 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:17-19; John 5:22; Luke 1:35; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 2:9-18; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; Heb. 8:1, 2; John 14:1-3.)

5. The Holy Spirit

God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ's life with power. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God. Sent by the Father and the Son to be always with His children, He extends spiritual gifts to the church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ, and in harmony with the Scriptures leads it into all truth. (Gen. 1:1, 2; Luke 1:35; 4:18; Acts 10:38; 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:11, 12; Acts 1:8; John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:7-13.)

6. Creation

God is Creator of all things, and has revealed in Scripture the authentic account of His creative activity. In six days the Lord made "the heaven and the earth" and all living things upon the earth, and rested on the seventh day of that first week. Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of His completed creative work. The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished it was "very good," declaring the glory of God. (Gen. 1; 2; Ex. 20:8-11; Ps. 19:1-6; 33:6, 9; 104; Heb. 11:3.)

7. The Nature of Man

Man and woman were made in the image of God with individuality, the power and freedom to think and to do. Though created free beings, each is an indivisible unity of body, mind, and soul, dependent upon God for life and breath and all else. When our first parents disobeyed God, they denied their dependence upon Him and fell from their high position under God.

The image of God in them was marred and they became subject to death. Their descendants share this fallen nature and its consequences. They are born with weaknesses and tendencies to evil. But God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself and by His Spirit restores in penitent mortals the image of their Maker. Created for the glory of God, they are called to love Him and one another, and to care for their environment. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7; Ps. 8:4-8; Acts 17:24-28; Gen. 3; Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12-17; 2 Cor. 5:19, 20; Ps. 51:10; 1 John 4:7, 8, 11, 20; Gen. 2:15.)

8. The Great Controversy

All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. This conflict originated in heaven when a created being, endowed with freedom of choice, in self-exaltation became Satan, God's adversary, and led into rebellion a portion of the angels. He introduced the spirit of rebellion into this world when he led Adam and Eve into sin. This human sin resulted in the distortion of the image of God in humanity, the disordering of the created world, and its eventual devastation at the time of the worldwide flood. Observed by the whole creation, this world became the arena of the universal conflict, out of which the God of love will ultimately be vindicated. To assist His people in this controversy, Christ sends the Holy Spirit and the loyal angels to guide, protect, and sustain them in the way of salvation. (Rev. 12:4-9; Isa. 14:12-14; Eze. 28:12-18; Gen. 3; Rom. 1:19-32; 5:12-21; 8:19-22; Gen. 6:8; 2 Peter 3:6; 1 Cor. 4:9; Heb. 1:14.)

9. The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ

In Christ's life of perfect obedience to God's will, His suffering, death, and resurrection, God provided the only means of atonement for human sin, so that those who by faith accept this atonement may have eternal life, and the whole creation may better understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator. This perfect atonement vindicates the righteousness of God's law and the graciousness of His character; for it both condemns our sin and provides for our forgiveness. The death of Christ is substitutionary and expiatory, reconciling and transforming. The resurrection of Christ proclaims God's triumph over the forces of evil, and for those who accept the atonement assures their final victory over sin and death. It declares the Lordship of Jesus Christ, before whom every knee in heaven and on earth will bow. (John 3:16; Isa. 53; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4, 20-22; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 19-21; Rom. 1:4; 3:25; 4:25; 8:3, 4; 1 John 2:2; 4:10; Col. 2:15; Phil. 2:6-11.)

10. The Experience of Salvation

In infinite love and mercy God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we might be made the righteousness of God. Led by the

Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Lord and Christ, as Substitute and Example. This faith which receives salvation comes through the divine power of the Word and is the gift of God's grace. Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God's sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin. Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God's law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life. Abiding in Him we become partakers of the divine nature and have the assurance of salvation now and in the judgment. (2 Cor. 5:17-21; John 3:16; Gal. 1:4; 4:4-7; Titus 3:3-7; John 16:8; Gal. 3:13, 14; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; Rom. 10:17; Luke 17:5; Mark 9:23, 24; Eph. 2:5-10; Rom. 3:21-26; Col. 1:13, 14; Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 3:26; John 3:3-8; 1 Peter 1:23; Rom. 12:2; Heb. 8:7-12; Eze. 36:25-27; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Rom. 8:1-4; 5:6-10.)

11. The Church

The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world; and we join together for worship, for fellowship, for instruction in the Word, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, for service to all mankind, and for the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. The church derives its authority from Christ, who is the incarnate Word, and from the Scriptures, which are the written Word. The church is God's family; adopted by Him as children, its members live on the basis of the new covenant. The church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ Himself is the Head. The church is the bride for whom Christ died that He might sanctify and cleanse her. At His return in triumph, He will present her to Himself a glorious church, the faithful of all the ages, the purchase of His blood, not having spot or wrinkle, but holy and without blemish. (Gen. 12:3; Acts 7:38; Eph. 4:11-15; 3:8-11; Matt. 28:19, 20; 16:13-20; 18:18; Eph. 2:19-22; 1:22, 23; 5:23-27; Col. 1:17, 18.)

12. The Remnant and Its Mission

The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness. (Rev. 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4; 2 Cor. 5:10; Jude 3, 14; 1 Peter 1:16-19; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Rev. 21:1-14.)

13. Unity in the Body of Christ

The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation. Through the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures we share the same faith and hope, and reach out in one witness to all. This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children. (Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; Matt. 28:19, 20; Ps. 133:1; 2 Cor. 5:16, 17; Acts 17:26, 27; Gal. 3:27, 29; Col. 3:10-15; Eph. 4:14-16; 4:1-6; John 17:20-23.)

14. Baptism

By baptism we confess our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and testify of our death to sin and of our purpose to walk in newness of life. Thus we acknowledge Christ as Lord and Saviour, become His people, and are received as members by His church. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ, the forgiveness of our sins, and our reception of the Holy Spirit. It is by immersion in water and is contingent on an affirmation of faith in Jesus and evidence of repentance of sin. It follows instruction in the Holy Scriptures and acceptance of their teachings. (Rom. 6:1-6; Col. 2:12, 13; Acts 16:30-33; 22:16; 2:38; Matt. 28:19, 20.)

15. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a participation in the emblems of the body and blood of Jesus as an expression of faith in Him, our Lord and Saviour. In this experience of communion Christ is present to meet and strengthen His people. As we partake, we joyfully proclaim the Lord's death until He comes again. Preparation for the Supper includes self-examination, repentance, and confession. The Master ordained the service of foot washing to signify renewed cleansing, to express a willingness to serve one another in Christ-like humility, and to unite our hearts in love. The communion service is open to all believing Christians. (1 Cor. 10:16, 17; 11:23-30; Matt. 26:17-30; Rev. 3:20; John 6:48-63; 13:1-17.)

16. Spiritual Gifts and Ministries

God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts which each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity. Given by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who apportions to each member as He wills, the gifts provide all abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfill its divinely ordained functions.

According to the Scriptures, these gifts include such ministries as faith, healing, prophecy, proclamation, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and self-sacrificing service and charity for the help and encouragement of people. Some members are called of God and endowed by the Spirit for functions recognized by the church in pastoral, evangelistic, apostolic, and teaching ministries particularly needed to equip the members for service, to build up the church to spiritual maturity, and to foster unity of the faith and knowledge of God. When members employ these spiritual gifts as faithful stewards of God's varied grace, the church is protected from the destructive influence of false doctrine, grows with a growth that is from God, and is built up in faith and love. (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:9-11, 27, 28; Eph. 4:8, 11-16; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-3; 1 Peter 4:10, 11.)

17. *The Gift of Prophecy*

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17; 19:10.)

18. *The Law of God*

The great principles of God's law are embodied in the Ten Commandments and exemplified in the life of Christ. They express God's love, will, and purposes concerning human conduct and relationships and are binding upon all people in every age. These precepts are the basis of God's covenant with His people and the standard in God's judgment. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit they point out sin and awaken a sense of need for a Saviour. Salvation is all of grace and not of works, but its fruitage is obedience to the Commandments. This obedience develops Christian character and results in a sense of well-being. It is an evidence of our love for the Lord and our concern for our fellow men. The obedience of faith demonstrates the power of Christ to transform lives, and therefore strengthens Christian witness. (Ex. 20:1-17; Ps. 40:7, 8; Matt. 22:36-40; Deut. 28:1-14; Matt. 5:17-20; Heb. 8:8-10; John 16:7-10; Eph. 2:8-10; 1 John 5:3; Rom. 8:3, 4; Ps. 19:7-14.)

19. *The Sabbath*

The beneficent Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God's unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship, and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the

Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God's kingdom. The Sabbath is God's perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people. Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God's creative and redemptive acts. (Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11; Luke 4:16; Isa. 56:5, 6; 58:13, 14; Matt. 12:1-12; Ex. 31:13-17; Eze. 20:12, 20; Deut. 5:12-15; Heb. 4:1-11; Lev. 23:32; Mark 1:32.)

20. *Stewardship*

We are God's stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use. We acknowledge God's ownership by faithful service to Him and our fellow men, and by returning tithes and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church. Stewardship is a privilege given to us by God for nurture in love and the victory over selfishness and covetousness. The steward rejoices in the blessings that come to others as a result of his faithfulness. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15; 1 Chron. 29:14; Haggai 1:3-11; Mal. 3:8-12; 1 Cor. 9:9-14; Matt. 23:23; Rom. 15:26, 27.)

21. *Christian Behavior*

We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with the principles of heaven. For the Spirit to recreate in us the character of our Lord we involve ourselves only in those things which will produce Christlike purity, health, and joy in our lives. This means that our amusement and entertainment should meet the highest standards of Christian taste and beauty. While recognizing cultural differences, our dress is to be simple, modest, and neat, befitting those whose true beauty does not consist of outward adornment but in the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit. It also means that because our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, we are to care for them intelligently. Along with adequate exercise and rest, we are to adopt the most healthful diet possible and abstain from the unclean foods identified in the Scriptures. Since alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the irresponsible use of drugs and narcotics are harmful to our bodies, we are to abstain from them as well. Instead, we are to engage in whatever brings our thoughts and bodies into the discipline of Christ, who desires our wholeness, joy, and goodness. (Rom. 12:1, 2; 1 John 2:6; Eph. 5:1-21; Phil. 4:8; 2 Cor. 10:5; 6:14-7:1; 1 Peter 3:1-4; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 10:31; Lev. 11:1-47; 3 John 2.)

22. *Marriage and the Family*

Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a

lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. For the Christian a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between partners who share a common faith. Mutual love, honor, respect, and responsibility are the fabric of this relationship, which is to reflect the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church. Regarding divorce, Jesus taught that the person who divorces a spouse, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery. Although some family relationships may fall short of the ideal, marriage partners who fully commit themselves to each other in Christ may achieve loving unity through the guidance of the Spirit and the nurture of the church. God blesses the family and intends that its members shall assist each other toward complete maturity. Parents are to bring up their children to love and obey the Lord. By their example and their words they are to teach them that Christ is a loving disciplinarian, ever tender and caring, who wants them to become members of His body, the family of God. Increasing family closeness is one of the earmarks of the final gospel message. (Gen. 2:18-25; Matt. 19:3-9; John 2:1-11; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:21-33; Matt. 5:31, 32; Mark 10:11, 12; Luke 16:18; 1 Cor. 7:10, 11; Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-4; Deut. 6:5-9; Prov. 22:6; Mal. 4:5, 6.)

23. Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary

There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent. (Heb. 8:1-5; 4:14-16; 9:11-28; 10:19-22; 1:3; 2:16, 17; Dan. 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:6; Lev. 16; Rev. 14:6, 7; 20:12; 14:12; 22:12.)

24. The Second Coming of Christ

The second coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel. The Saviour's coming will be literal, personal, visible, and worldwide. When He returns, the righteous dead will be resurrected, and together with the righteous living will be glorified and taken to heaven, but the unrighteous will die. The almost complete fulfillment of most lines of prophecy, together with the present condition of the world, indicates that Christ's coming is imminent. The time of that event has not been revealed, and we are therefore exhorted to be ready at all times. (Titus 2:13; Heb. 9:28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:7; Matt. 26:43, 44; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2:8; Rev. 14:14-20; 19:11-21; Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 Thess. 5:1-6.)

25. Death and Resurrection

The wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His redeemed. Until that day death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ, who is our life, appears, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord. The second resurrection, the resurrection of the unrighteous, will take place a thousand years later. (Rom. 6:23; 1 Tim. 6:15, 16; Eccl. 9:5, 6; Ps. 146:3, 4; John 11:11-14; Col. 3:4; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; John 5:28, 29; Rev. 20:1-10.)

26. The Millennium and the End of Sin

The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels. At its close Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever. (Rev. 20; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Jer. 4:23-26; Rev. 21:1-5; Mal. 4:1; Eze. 28:18, 19.)

27. The New Earth

On the new earth, in which righteousness dwells, God will provide an eternal home for the redeemed and a perfect environment for everlasting life, love, joy, and learning in His presence. For here God Himself will dwell with His people, and suffering and death will have passed away. The great controversy will be ended, and sin will be no more. All things, animate and inanimate, will declare that God is love; and He shall reign forever. Amen. (2 Peter 3:13; Isa. 35; 65:17-25; Matt. 5:5; Rev. 21:1-7; 22:1-5; 11:15.)

APPENDIX VIII

ARTICLES IN DENOMINATIONAL PERIODICALS

EDITORIALS



AN IMPORTANT SERIES

Joe Engelkemier's "Independent Ministries: Should We Support Them?" on page 10 of this issue starts an important series. His four articles that will run throughout this month will answer many of the questions we hear Adventists asking.

How does the *Review* regard independent ministries and their publications?

First, we strongly support the concept behind them, as well as most of them individually. We have reservations about a small number, for reasons we will mention below.

Independent ministries have been a great strength to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Over the years they have unleashed additional energies, creativity, and funds for the mission of the church. Ellen White gave them her blessing, personally supporting the Madison school in Tennessee.

And look at their contribution to the church's mission today! Adventists of all ages are volunteering time and skills to build churches and schools through ministries like Maranatha Volunteers International and Mission Church Builders. Others are running vegetarian restaurants, like the Country Life chain in the largest cities of the world. Still others are involved in educational, healing, and printing ministries.

Most independent ministries are members of the Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries. Their annual convention throbs with enthusiasm, ideas, energy—and nonstop talk. These are Adventist entrepreneurs who love the Lord and His people and who come together to share and learn about witnessing in the marketplace.

Second, we stand for a free church press. We do not agree with everything we read in the publications of independent ministries, but we support their right to go into print.

Today one can find a staggering array of unofficial Adventist publications. They range from the radical right to the radical left. Alongside some, the *Review* looks flamingly liberal; alongside others, we look like bluenosed conservatives.

The proliferation of Adventist magazines and newsletters parallels the scene in Western society, where a host of specialized publications appeals to special interest groups. But the *Review* seeks to swim against the current: we are the paper for the *whole* church, and refuse to become the voice or vehicle for any one element in the church.

Reservations

However, we cannot give our blessing to every independent ministry or its publication. When we find any of the following elements present, we think that ministry is out of line and does not deserve the support of members:

□ **When it solicits or accepts tithe.**

In our view such a course weakens the body. No matter what arguments may be brought to bear in support of the practice, including Ellen White's example, we think that the biblical principles of tithing and the unity of the church, supported by specific counsel from Ellen White herself, rule it out of court.

□ **When it is critical of the church, its leaders, and its ministers.**

The church isn't perfect, and its

leaders may make mistakes. But the Lord is head of the church, not humans, and we are to look always to Him. The church is safe in His hands. He uses weak, erring humans, just as He always has, to keep His work moving forward.

□ **When it polarizes rather than builds up.**

A few independent ministries seek to win favor and funds by putting themselves forward as the remnant of the true or "historic" Adventist Church. They alone preserve the truth; they alone give the message for this time. By inference or by explicit statement they alone can be trusted and deserve financial backing.

We say: Beware of this attitude, wherever it may be found or whatever form it may take. God hasn't raised up one man here or a little group there and given to them alone the truth for today. Yes, we must always be open, receptive to new light; and yes, we *do* need revival and reformation. But the Lord is leading out a *people*, not an offshoot; a church, not a few here and there. The vision of Revelation 7 and 14 is of a vast multitude—so great that no one can number it.

The 1988 North American Division year-end meetings voted guidelines for acceptable independent ministries. The list includes our three points above plus a number of others: the standing of leaders, theological positions, cooperative actions, use of ministerial ordination, outward in mission rather than inward, statement of mission, use of Ellen White quotations, audited financial statements, and composition of boards (see Mar. 2, 1989, *Adventist Review*).

We urge every Adventist: read Elder Engelkemier's four articles during this month. Read them carefully. Read them prayerfully. Test them by the inspired writings.

They won't give you an index of proscribed ministries or publications. But they will give you a basis for examination so you can check out any outfit that comes along.

WILLIAM G. JOHNSON

CURRENT ISSUES

A Conversation With the Editor



This interview arises out of requests to address publicly many of the questions asked through the year by members and by our readers.

Widmer: Let's begin with your overall impressions about the Adventist Church. What do you see that *pleases* you?

Johnsson: Many things! I am pleased at what I consider her overall health. Now, the church has many problems, many flaws, and she is far from God's ideal for her. But I see many evidences that the Lord is in our midst and leading us on. Sometimes we get in His way, and He leads us on in spite of us, not because of us.

The church is clearly making progress in areas where we have found clearer vision today. For instance, in terms of health. Many of our pioneers and leaders even a generation ago were not careful in healthful living, in diet. We have made a movement forward here.

I also sense an openness to people of all races, cultures, and ethnic backgrounds. We have a sharper sense of being a world family.

Our newest thrust, Global Mission, excites me. This is taking us right back to our roots, to our biblical roots. We are here for a purpose—the gospel to all the world in this generation. And the Lord is calling us back to do something new, to take on some tough assignments for Him. I think this church and especially the younger generation want some tough assignments, want to be uprooted from flowery beds of ease to venture forth in daring for the Lord. Global Mission offers those great possibilities.

Does anything trouble you about this church?

Yes, several things. First of all is the lack of unity. In some respects we seem so divided, so quick to find fault, so quick to believe the worst about a person or a leader. I just wish there were more grace manifested among Adventists in the way we relate to one another. Let us think the best of one another. Let us build up one another in love as the Bible admonishes.

The second troubling item is our worldliness. For a people who have Adventist in their name, we are quite non-Adventist in many ways. I think the Lord is calling us back to simplicity, to the basic strength of the family and the home, to fidelity in our marriages, to fidelity in our business dealings—so our word can be counted upon. These basic virtues make any society great, and come

right out of Scripture. And they will be *our* greatness if we'll let the Lord work them out for us.

Here's a question about church leaders. What role should leaders play today?

Listening is the key. Leaders, at such a time as this, need to have their ears close to the ground, to be in touch with people—not telling them what to do, but just listening to their concerns.

And second, a leader needs to be less a person who gives orders and more a person who sets an example of humility, of service by a practical living witness, of preaching the Word.

Above all, our people are looking for spiritual leaders. We don't want so much executives and corporate types; we want men and women of God who know their Lord, who can preach powerfully from the Word, who can pray with power.

Where do you see the real powerhouse of authority in the church?

The power resides at the local level.

So what about our leaders at these "exalted" positions beyond the local church? They can be thought leaders, spiritual leaders, and, I would hope, leaders with a vision, but change can only be caught from them. Change is really effected at the local level. That's where the power is! That's where the real church is!

And as you know, Myron, being here at the church's headquarters, we can get things exactly back to front—totally out of touch in terms of the real power structures.

What important leadership trends have you noticed since last year's General Conference session?

Significant changes. A more open, more collegial style—less directive, and with a high degree of delegation.

Do you think the General Conference's downsizing of its overhead is helping or hurting the mission of the church?

It's obviously hurting people who are affected. But in the long run it will help the mission of the church enormously. Why? Because it forces us to weigh priorities and to focus on that which is central.

Let me tell you that what we've seen of downsizing is only the beginning. This decade is going to be a decade of continual downsizing.

Why?

Financial. We're in a financial crunch, not because the church is collapsing, but because it is growing so fast in

*William G.
Johnsson
answers
readers'
questions on
the church.*

**BY WILLIAM G.
JOHNSON
AND MYRON WIDMER**

PHOTOS BY JOEL D. SPRINGER

areas where our members are less affluent and the church is not self-supporting. The faster it grows in those areas, the greater the burden, particularly for North America.

In addition, the tithe giving has not kept up with the growth of the church. And our institutions are taking great amounts of money.

In a secular, materialistic age, what do you see as the mission of the church?

To heed God's call to be a prophetic remnant—a remnant calling people from every part of society and the world to gather together and, in the words of Revelation 14:7, to “fear God, and give glory to him; . . . and worship him.” In such an age God is calling for a people who will put Him first and will be awaiting His coming. He currently is working through many agencies. I believe He has a particular role for the Seventh-day Adventist Church to call people back to obedience, to reflect His character, and to herald His second coming.

This is what we've been about since 1844, but this mission comes with renewed focus and a sharpened edge because of the heightened secularism of our age.

Do you think materialism has unalterably affected the church in North America?

I hope not unalterably. It has affected us. We are probably more materialistic than the early Adventists. That's not to say that they were poor, because some of them were wealthy people—James White made a lot of money over the years and spent it in the work—but we have become very much attached to our material possessions.

I hope and pray not unalterably, because I think the Lord is going to call upon us to abandon all these possessions before He comes and to become a basic people—in terms of our lifestyle, our simplicity, our love for one another, our love and worship of Him. For some people, I am afraid, that call is going to cost just too much. They'll say “No, Lord”—like Lot's wife.

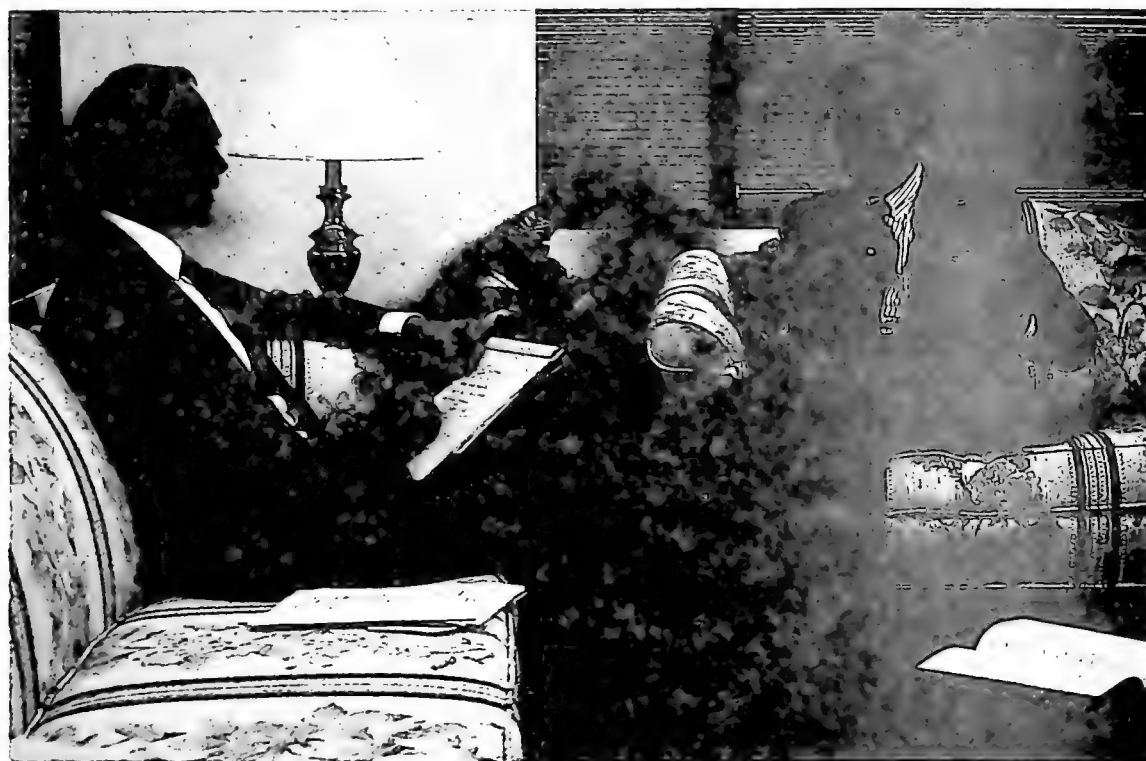
Here's a question concerning the church's ethnic work. With Hispanic and Black evangelism perceived as doing quite well in North America, is there any hope for a revival among Anglos?

Right now it looks bleak. Anglo growth is pretty slow—almost dead. But the fault is not all with the general population. I don't think the Anglo church is trying very hard. I think the Lord would have us be bold—experiment, try some new ways.

I am an optimist, and I believe the Lord is able to do a new thing. Some Anglo congregations are already pulling in young adults,

professionals. Usually not by public evangelism, but by involving the laypeople in small groups and making friends. And maybe it's not all a matter of finding new approaches. Maybe it's the very spirit of the people—the messengers—we must examine. When we are alive with Christ's life, it cannot be contained; it will overflow, and other people will be drawn into it. Our biggest need is to turn to the Lord and seek His power and grace.

Realizing that many young people are



not being attracted to a perceived message given by the church—a heavy emphasis upon standards and the do's and don'ts—can we do something differently to attract these people without compromising our message?

Let me start with your last point. We are a people of high standards. I hope we always will be. Sometimes, however, we have made standards foremost. Our younger generation wants a Christ-centered church, Christ-centered congregations where He is uplifted, adored, worshiped in song, in prayer, in preaching. This does not mean setting aside our distinctives, not at all. I hope we'll always keep those firmly in place in terms of our message and lifestyle, but the concentration must be less on particularities and more in terms of general principles.

For instance, the younger generation is pointing out great inconsistencies—sometimes even hypocrisies—among us. We have concentrated on particular items, say, of dress and adornment, and made almost test cases of those. The basic principle has been simplicity. And the younger generation will ask why we have concentrated so much on this particular

item of adornment and at the same time drive away in expensive cars.

How about theology? Do you see that we will sometime need to change our theological underpinnings to make them more palatable to some of the right- and left-wing groups in the church?

Adventists' understanding of theology shows considerable change over the course of our history. However, the pillars have stood the test—they are biblically based. I don't see

any significant change coming there.

I do not see us changing to make our beliefs more palatable to some. The general direction of change that I believe the Lord would have us move toward more and more is to make Christ and His salvation central.

But isn't there a lot of theological controversy now?

Certainly some exists, but I believe strongly in the leading of the Lord in terms of doctrinal understanding. The church has made mistakes over the years. In 1888 we certainly did not follow, by and large, the leading of the Lord in that historic conference. But as a people the Lord is leading us more and more unto the perfect day. So I can see the possibility that there may be a clarified understanding in some doctrinal areas that eventually could become enshrined in our fundamental beliefs. The 27 fundamentals went considerably beyond what we had previously. And the preamble to the 27 states they are not set in concrete, leaving room for the Lord in the future to lead us to clearer understanding or clearer expression.

Do you see the debates over the nature of Christ, perfection, and righteousness by

**faith as helpful or hurtful for the church?
And is there a resolution in sight?**

These debates are both good and bad. Take the nature of Christ, for instance. Each side wants to say something important. One side emphasizes Jesus as truly human—one with us. And that's an important biblical truth. The other says He was truly different in that we can never make Him exactly like us; otherwise He could not be our Saviour.

Now strangely enough, in the Bible and I believe in the writings of Ellen G. White both ideas are there—the closeness of Jesus to us and His difference from us. We need to preserve both these elements, or else we will fall into error. So we need to listen to each other—there is truth in listening and in having both sides contribute.

Do you think that Ellen White and her writings are still a credible voice among Adventists?

Yes, I think a great majority of our people still regard Ellen White and her writings with deep respect. I think we have a clearer view of her writings than we had, say, 20 years ago.

Has it changed our understanding of her?

Yes, we see her human side more clearly. In this respect probably we have gone back a hundred years. When she was alive her contemporaries saw her humanity. She never pretended to be a flawless person. But after she died, there was almost a beatification of Ellen White. Naturally enough, recent investigations and research have shown her humanity. This in no way weakens her prophetic gift or the value of her writings. Maybe it helps us to see her in a more accurate perspective.

Now a question on the proliferation of independent, or supporting, ministries. Is there a proper role for those within the Adventist Church?

Oh, absolutely. I'm very supportive of these independent ministries, or as they now like to call themselves, supporting ministries. The great majority are doing marvelous service for the Lord, things that could never happen without them. Their role is to work side by side with the organized church in a cooperative way, doing their own thing, not always seeing exactly eye-to-eye, but one in purpose and mission. Each supporting the other rather than working against each other.

Does the existence of some of these make the denomination uneasy?

Like a thorn in the flesh?

Yes.



Well, some could be perceived as a thorn in the flesh. But then we need to ask ourselves What can we learn from these supporting ministries? Are they calling us back to what is central and basic, which we are in danger of losing? On the other side, I would hope supporting ministries would avoid seeing themselves as the pure church, the "pure remnant," with the rest of the church having gone to the dogs. That's a dangerous attitude, and it is certainly not easy to live with.

In the recent months the church has taken action either to disfellowship an individual in a supporting ministry or to disband a church. Is that proper for the church?

I'm not going to get involved in a particular situation, but it is altogether proper to disfellowship an individual or to disband a congregation that is creating a state of disunity. One of our fundamental doctrines involves the church and unity. That is just as much a doctrine as the doctrine of the sanctuary. If an individual is tearing up a church, he is destroying what Christ died to establish and to build up.

Discipline is a painful thing. It is a step that should not be taken quickly or lightly, and only after much counseling and prayer and giving the individual or the group opportunity to change course.

Do you think Adventists really believe in righteousness by faith?

Well, it's there in our beliefs, but it can become a cliché. I don't know any Adventist who will say "I don't believe in righteousness by faith." The question is really How does our theology live out in our lives?

And that should give us assurance of salvation?

Oh yes, definitely! Not a false confidence, but a certainty that Jesus is *my* Redeemer, *my* Substitute. The Lord would have us walk with a spring in our step, with the certainty of our salvation. I believe the people who will meet the Lord are going to be a joyful people, a people of hope. They won't meet Him in fear.

"Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us."

Some people are saying that the pastorate is under siege. Is that so?

Yes. Beyond the financial pressures that have always been there in running a local church, the pastors are called to try to hold the church together in the face of so many competing voices. People with publications and videos would pull the church toward the left or the right. Pastors spend a lot of time and energy just trying to keep people calm, stable.

One last reader's question: "What should be the church's relationship to gays and lesbians?"

I make a strong distinction between inclination and practice. All of us have inclinations in certain directions, and I would certainly not enter into any sort of judgment with regard to a person's inclination. What one does with the inclination makes the difference in my regard. I think the biblical teaching is clearly in the direction of heterosexual relationships and maintaining the traditional family that comes down to us from Eden.

What do you think the future holds for the church if Jesus does not come back soon?

A number of things. I see tremendous growth by the year 2000—maybe a church of 10 million, even 20 million. These days are incredible. The Lord is doing marvelous things in our midst. Many of us are so self-centered and focusing so much on little things and so involved in arguing that we don't realize what the Lord is doing. He is pouring out His Spirit despite all our problems and failings.

Second, I expect to see increasing financial pressures, which will lead to the third—many changes in terms of institutions. Collapse of some institutions and some programs that have been around for years and years, but with the rise of new ones or new ways to do what the Lord wants us to do. And fourth, a greater focus on what is central will be forced upon us. Hard times and tight finances will force us to do what we should have been doing anyway.

Which is?

To glorify Him, to spread the good news of His salvation and His coming to those around us.

William G. Johnsson is editor and Myron Widmer is an associate editor of the Adventist Review.

FAITH ALIVE!

Independent Ministries



By Calvin B. Rock

Why are we discouraged from supporting independent ministries? All that I have heard from them has been Bible truth. Isn't that what is important? I also hear that some of them have been disfellowshipped. I want to know what they are doing wrong. Also, I really don't understand what "independent ministries" means.

Independent ministries are services or groups not denominationally sponsored or legally connected with the formal church organization. Church members should not be discouraged from supporting independent ministries per se. Many of these groups engage in evangelism of various types and are in harmony with the church's doctrines and objectives. Leadership welcomes this kind of involvement.

The negativism that you hear no doubt results from the activities of some independent ministries that do not fit the above description. These groups undermine confidence in the organized body and promote their own opinions as God's will for His people.

Should you help finance the independent ministries that are positive toward denominational objectives? Yes. Should you help finance independent ministries that call the church Babylon, that claim the General Conference has been infiltrated by the Jesuits, that divert tithe from its proper channels, that spend their time criticizing and correcting the church instead of evangelizing society? No.

This is not to say that the church is perfect or that it does not need improving. It always has, and it does now. However, it is still the special object of God's "supreme regard," and He will cause it to triumph (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 49).

The church does not keep or publish a

list of recommended independent ministries. A good test, however, is the scriptural one: "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20). Is the group you have in mind positive regarding the church and its programs? Is it optimistic about the triumph of God's people, or is its message pessimistic and denunciatory? If you are in doubt, please contact your pastor. If you do not trust your pastor's advice, you may already be experiencing the loss of confidence that allows negative ministries to survive.

The church is still "the special object of Christ's regard," and He will cause it to triumph.

My son wants to be a minister. I strongly disagree with his choice, not only because preachers don't make any money, but also because of the disrespect shown toward the clergy in society, as well as in the church. How would you advise?

The publicity given to the cases of Jim Bakker, Jimmy Swaggart, and others has made the public—already afflicted with the Watergate mentality—even more suspicious of their leaders, especially those in religious organizations.

Surprisingly, however, the latest Gallup poll shows that in terms of honesty and ethical standards, the clergy, when compared to other professions and occu-

pations, still rates very high. In fact, from 1976 through 1983 the clergy consistently topped the list of Gallup's "ethical index." Its highest rating came in 1985, when 67 percent of the population ranked it higher than all other occupations tested. Pharmacists and druggists, who rated second, were slightly lower. This year the clergy rating has dropped to 57 percent. Pharmacists and druggists have now replaced ministers at the top of the scale, with a 60 percent rating.

The most respected occupations after the clergy are dentists, medical doctors, engineers, and college professors. The third group embraces bankers, TV reporters and commentators, newspaper reporters, and funeral directors. Following them come lawyers, stockbrokers, members of Congress, business executives, and building contractors. At the bottom of the scale are local and state politicians, realtors, insurance agents, advertisers, and car salespersons.

But the determinative criterion for choosing one's lifework should be service, not community status or income. That may sound old-fashioned, and I suppose it is—after all, it is grounded in the words of our Lord, whose characterization of His ministry was "I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (see Matt. 20:28).

Our church still needs mission-oriented devotees to serve the cause at home and abroad. Most must serve as laity, assisting and supporting church leadership; others are called to be front-line leaders. My advice is that you let the Lord lead your son in this matter—the life you save may be *his* and many others.

Calvin B. Rock serves as a general vice president of the General Conference. He holds doctoral degrees in ministry and religious ethics.

SPEAKING OUT

Self-supporting Work



By Wayne Dull

You've seen their papers and heard people talking about them: ministries not operated by the conference. What about self-supporting work, anyway?

Let's look at two approaches these groups take and review the inspired guidelines regarding them.

James decides to form a group independent of the church so he can "get the work done right." He gains a following, but they devote much of their energy to pointing out the mistakes made by the church. They are known as a self-supporting group.

John also decides to establish a group to forward God's work. He counsels with church brethren and helps find solutions to the church's problems. Though not supported by the conference, he works in harmony with the church. They also are known as a self-supporting group.

Divine Yardstick

Which people are the true self-supporting workers? Inspiration has left us with a divine yardstick.

■ *They accept the challenge to minister as self-supporting missionaries.* "In many places self-supporting missionaries can work successfully. It was as a self-supporting missionary that the apostle Paul labored in spreading the knowledge of Christ throughout the world."¹ God has endorsed those who sustain themselves while working for Him. They fulfill a vital role in His work without using overstretched church dollars.

■ *They are willing to sacrifice.* True self-supporting workers do not live for the "promise of gain or worldly honor," or for "flattering prospects in this life." They aim to "unite with [Christ] in His work."² They do not allow their means of self-support to become all-absorbing.

■ *They unite their efforts with the church.* "The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally

to the work, and *unite their efforts* with those of ministers and church officers."³

■ *They help carry God's last message to the world.* "Men will be called from the plow and from the more common commercial business vocations" to give the final warning to mankind. Thus, "onward and still onward the work will advance until the whole earth shall have been warned, and then shall the end come."⁴ Their goal is to unite with the mission committed to the church.

■ *They recognize and respect the*

They will do all in their

power to support the church

and will not turn their

warfare against it.

church as "God's appointed agency for the salvation of men."⁵ They will do all in their power to support and uphold it in words and actions, and not turn their "warfare against the church."⁶

■ *They will be well-balanced in principles and lifestyle.* They will not become overzealous and fanatical, or careless and indifferent.⁷ They will not make some insignificant matter or doctrinal understanding their all-absorbing message.

■ *They will bring all the tithes into God's appointed "storehouse."* They will not solicit tithe for their own support or evangelistic projects, but will return tithe through the regular channels of the church.⁸

Professor E. A. Sutherland, president of Madison School, the first self-supporting unit, understood well God's

purpose in establishing this branch of the work. He said:

"The founders have endeavored in an unselfish way to provide for the training of workers to labor in cooperation with, and auxiliary to, the work carried on by the conference in which they are located. . . .

"The teachers and students of the Madison School are loyal members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, supporting the organized work by their tithes and offerings, and endeavoring to raise up churches that will also be loyal members of the denomination.

"These were the understandings, these were the positions, when Ellen White placed her strong approval on the work of that institution."⁹

Only the groups that follow these guidelines are the true self-supporting units. In this way only can the work be carried forward in the right way. Then they will be a branch of the church to help it carry forward its mission. Others who may profess the name of self-supporting work without these fruits are not genuine.

May all true self-supporting workers be careful to live up to the distinguishing marks and purpose that God has given them.

References

- ¹ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 154.
- ² *Ibid.*, pp. 479, 480.
- ³ *Gospel Workers*, p. 352. (Italics supplied.)
- ⁴ *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 96.
- ⁵ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9.
- ⁶ *Testimonies for Ministers*, p. 22.
- ⁷ See *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 644.
- ⁸ See *Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 248, 249.
- ⁹ "Ownership and Control of the Madison School," p. 16.

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The editors of the Adventist Review do not necessarily agree with the opinions expressed in Speaking Out, but publish these articles to stimulate thought, produce constructive discussion, and allow readers to test the validity of the ideas presented.

CHURCH

Poison in the Mail

*It took a strong dose of reality
to make one Adventist question his diet of
controversy and condemnation.*

By Francis S. Green

Nearly four years ago, during a peaceful board meeting at our little church in New England, I stood up and offered the members my resignation as head elder. "Any resemblance between this corrupt church and Christianity is purely coincidental," I told my shocked listeners. When I had finished my bitter speech, one offended elder suggested they take my name off the church books as well. I quickly agreed.

How does a once-loyal Seventh-day Adventist reach such a low point in his Christian experience? In my case it was primarily through the printed word. I had read every far-left and far-right Adventist-oriented publication I could find. Our denomination has a number of supportive ministries whose written materials serve the Lord's church loyally. I do not refer to these, but to their toxic imitators who mix a seemingly pious message with the seeds of discord and disunion.

In the beginning my rationale for such reading was a need to stay informed. But the end result was a fascination with

scandal and controversy. The spirit of the publications I was ingesting was one of continual criticism and condemnation, encouraging a "them against us" attitude between liberal and conservative elements in the pews. The underlying message was always "We've got to save the church for God."

A Raging Addiction

Over a period of years my need to be informed had become a raging addiction; I asked to get on any mailing list that had missed my name. Religious discussions that didn't involve theological argument or church scandal became dull and uninteresting for me. Controversial meetings and speakers became a favorite activity. I began to hang on the words of people living on the fringes of the church, who were drawing away its membership or solemnly admonishing the faithful to "stay with the ship" while their own "ministry" steadily eroded church members' confidence in both captain and crew.

Still I continued to accept church re-

sponsibilities, serving as head elder, teaching Sabbath school, and exhorting the faithful to stay in God's church while my own faith kept sinking lower and lower.

Two months before my resignation, some of my best friends began publishing a "Come out of her, My people" message. Their newsletter, once heralding "victory over sin" seminars, had evolved into an anti-Adventist cult. Hoping to convince them of their error during a business trip to California, I became the houseguest of one of the separatist leaders, a longtime personal friend.

My host began almost at once to pressure me to leave "the corruption of Adventism" and cast my lot with the new group he and others were forming. Controversy and scandal in the church were presented to me as proof that the Lord was no longer with the denomination. I was besieged by the avalanche of inspired quotations warning that the church cannot allow corruption in its midst without becoming corrupt itself.

A False Impression

The statements used were rebukes, admonitions, and warnings from the Lord—given in love over a period of years—addressing a variety of problems and situations in the remnant church. But gathered together as they were, the testimonies created the impression that the Lord had given up on the denomination. The qualifying or softer portions of the original quotations were either unknown or ignored, and the repeated warnings *against* identifying Adventism as Babylon and calling people out of her were explained away as applying to the church before her probation had supposedly closed.

After a few days of agonizing struggle, I accepted my friend's earnest arguments—not because they were biblical, airtight, or even logical, but because I had conditioned my own mind to embrace this deception by constant exposure to separatists, offshoots, and so-called reform movements.

About a year after my separation from the church, I came across a copy of a popular "Adventist" scandal sheet containing a discussion of the separatist group of which I was now a part. The article was filled with inaccuracies, even

incorporating outright lies. This exposé went so far as to accuse us of undressing at meetings and our leaders of carrying guns and trying to change the weather! The testimony of the most bitter of our former members was accepted as gospel. I was appalled.

Questioning the Exposés

But as I read I began to remember that I had accepted this publication's attacks upon denominational leaders and institutions for years, assuming the detailed information given to be wholly accurate. In fact, this particular paper had been the first to begin undermining my confidence in the final triumph of the church. I now began to question how true all the previous exposés were if the things written about our own group were so inaccurate.

Through the mercy of the Lord, today I am once more a member in good and regular standing in God's remnant church. I write this for others who may be as heedless as I was of the Lord's admonition to seek things that are pure

and true (Phil. 4:8). Today I see that I created my own disaster, in large measure, through what I chose to read, the meetings I chose to attend, and the speakers I chose to hear.

*When I saw the testimony
of a bitter former member
of our group accepted as
gospel, I began to have
second thoughts.*

I would counsel others to consider the spirit of what you read. Everything does not have to come from denominational

presses to have value, but what is the burden of the message presented? Is the material heavy with unrelenting criticism and condemnation? Are "itching ears" appealed to with tales of new "prophets" or strange new interpretations of time prophecies? Is Jesus the center of the ministry's presentations? Or is the center actually "reform" or "perfection"?

Muckraking and scandal should be avoided like the plague. Such reading can be lethal. I speak as one who knows, one who almost lost his spiritual life to poison in the mail. 



Francis S. Green is a literature evangelist working in the high desert area of southern California.

EDITORIAL



Video Sickness

Long ago I concluded that Hollywood isn't in the business of building up God's kingdom. But only recently I learned—to my hurt—that some videos produced by Adventists can be as deadly to the spiritual life as anything coming out of the movie industry.

After a long conversation with a friend I yielded to his pleas that I examine a two-part video series that he claimed had vital information. I viewed the first video—more than two hours' worth—with fascination, horror, and anger. A slick production, it blended facts and falsehood, plots and paranoia, insinuation and intrigue. Garbed in the language of prayer, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, and Ellen White, it ripped into the Seventh-day Adventist Church, its leaders, teachers, and institutions.

The video made me sick—literally. Although it raised valid concerns, it manipulated the viewer. Claiming to warn Adventists of dangers within the church, it specialized in its own form of mind control. After I had seen the video I had had enough—I refused to screen the second one.

As I analyzed the material of this video, seven scriptural tests came to mind. They helped me see it in clearer light.

1. The one-on-one test. Jesus tells us that if we have a problem with someone in the church, we first go to that person and face him or her one-on-one (Matt. 18:15-17; 5:23, 24). We don't talk to others *about* the person until we have first talked *with* him or her.

But the makers of this video brought heavy charges against leaders of our church without contacting them. They propagated their allegations on video, bypassing Jesus' instruction.

2. The judging motives test. Jesus tells us that we should steer clear of judging others' motives (Matt. 7:1-5; 1 Cor.

4:5). Only God can read the heart; only He can be fair. The video makers, however, imputed sinister motives without hesitation.

3. The love test. Jesus said: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).^{*} Paul, who extolled love as the supreme quality (1 Cor. 13), pointed out that love doesn't compile a record of wrongs (verse 5). And John

*Some videos circulating
among Adventists will
poison your soul.*

wrote: "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14). The video failed this test massively.

4. The unity test. Jesus' last prayer was that His followers might be knit together like the family in heaven (John 17:20, 21). Ellen White also frequently called upon the Advent people to "press together, press together, press together." Unfortunately, the video sowed distrust and fragmentation.

5. The accusation test. The Scriptures identify the one who accuses God's people—he is Satan; Christ is their defender (Zech. 3:1-5; Rev. 12:10; Jude 9). In this test the video failed miserably. It mentioned several leaders by name, portraying them as liars and agents working from within to derail the church.

This aspect of the video troubled me the most. I *know* the individuals named. They have given many years of service to building up God's people; some have served

abroad and hazarded their lives for this movement; they are humble, devoted servants of the Lord. To suggest that they have infiltrated the church in order to undermine it seems preposterous.

6. The loyalty test. "Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account," says the Scripture (Heb. 13:17; see also verse 7; 1 Thess. 5:12, 13). This test, of course, negates the entire thrust of those who want to exalt themselves by accusing the church's leaders of apostasy. It balances the individual side of Christianity, by which we become children of God, against our corporate responsibilities as members of the body of Christ. Here again the video flunked the biblical norm.

7. The mission test. Jesus commissions His followers: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (John 20:21). He calls us to a life that flows outward, bringing to others help, healing, and the good news about His salvation. The Christian seeks to build, not to tear down; he or she looks out on a dying world and seeks to win it for Christ. But the video looked inward, focusing on faults real or imagined in the church.

Seven tests—searching, tough, but a safeguard. Ellen White supports and elaborates each. Perhaps they will help you, dear reader, as they helped me. They can aid you as you sort through the various papers and videos that come your way.

But I urge you: handle these materials with care! Especially the videos—for that medium has bewitching power to suck you in. Some videos circulating among Adventists will make you more than physically sick—they will poison your soul.

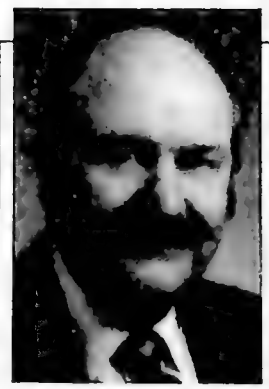
^{*} All Bible quotations in this article come from the Revised Standard Version.

WILLIAM G. JOHNSON

Sending tithe to independent ministries

Cyril Miller

A Union president shares his views on independent ministries, tithes sent to them, the rumor mills, and how they affect the ministry of the church.



Cyril Miller is the president of Southwestern Union Conference, Burleson, Texas. Reprinted with slight editorial changes from the January 1992 Southwestern Union Record.

M

ost independent ministries are not ministries at all. They are private organizations!

That's right! They are *private organizations* owned and operated by a few private incorporators who primarily advance their own personal views and interests.

Also, a number of these private organizations circulate publications that criticize the church and malign its leaders with a barrage of false, misleading, or even lying accusations.

Why? Some think it is for the sole purpose of generating tithe and offering support from our members whose love, confidence, and loyalty for the church are strained. Others say not so; but it is happening anyhow.

Is the church at war?

Yes, many of the so-called independent ministries do nothing but attack and harass our pastors or conference leaders and depreciate our educational and medical institutions.

Recently one very loyal and loving pastor confessed that both his congregations had several independent ministry supporters, and they were depressing him and making him physically ill.

He said, "The pressure is too great! Their attitudes produce tension and strife, and they in turn give our church very little financial support." He sounded like he wanted to leave and find a better place to serve.

How many independent ministries are there?

The General Conference has identified nearly 800 private organizations, most of which seek our members' finan-

cial support. I sincerely wonder why some of our good church members send them God's tithe and do not support their local church and conference. It is almost like a conspiracy.

Again, most of the so-called independent ministries are not ministries at all. True gospel ministry extends loving care to heal the hurts of people. However, most of these private-interest organizations do not!

What do they do for you?

Almost nothing! Do they call when you are discouraged? No! Do they visit when you are sick? No! Do they support your Pathfinders or youth camp? No! Do they subsidize your church school? No! Do they pay your pastor's salary? No! Do they support your academies and college? No!

They won't even be around to conduct your funeral when you die! Well... what *do they do*, anyway?

How much tithe do private organizations receive each year?

Enough for the General Conference to cut back its home and overseas budgets \$8 million this year and call home some missionaries.

In addition, North American conferences have been forced to cut back their budgets and reduce pastors and teachers drastically. One local field has reduced one third of its workers during the past three or four years. The church is suffering.

Last year alone, one private organization received \$1.6 million. Yet it spent \$1.8 million. So, they face grave financial problems and are intensifying their publications of outlandish criticisms of the church to raise more tithe and offerings from our members.

Obviously, the more sensational their charges, such as pastors using hypnotism

in the pulpit, the more money they seem to raise. This is the same method used by certain radio-TV evangelists.

They are using the church and its leaders as a whipping post to stir up our people emotionally and draw increased financial support. When we respond to such tactics, we become pawns in their hands to be manipulated and misled. All this undermines the church.

Someone must speak out.

Yes, I know these are strong statements, but someone must speak out. Someone must help our members think it through for themselves. Why? Because the future of our church and many precious souls are seriously in peril.

Another former pastor who challenged our denomination's doctrinal teachings and the gift of prophecy received more than \$5 million in tithes and offerings during one calendar year. That's a lot more than many conferences receive annually and enough to live in luxury for a lifetime.

Another group, which regularly mails its two-color publication to our homes, was taking in \$200,000 to \$300,000 just a few years ago. And today I am sure the figure is considerably higher, because the group is very aggressive and is attracting more attention.

What do private organizations do with God's holy tithe?

We do not know, but U.S. federal law requires private nonprofit corporations to file annual 990 IRS forms to report their financial operations. I also believe donors have a right to know.

Again, how much tithe do the nearly 800 private organizations receive each year? No one but God and the IRS actually knows. Obviously, some research could reveal the facts. I think it would be good to know. Don't you?

Could it be that some may be personally profiting and perhaps becoming rich as their private organizations take multiplied millions away from God's storehouse each year? Many think this is possible.

What difference does it make?

Some members, standing on the sidelines, may say, "What difference does it make?" But those who love the church say, "It makes a lot of difference." Our already overworked pastors must now serve additional churches, and that's not

all.

Conference subsidies to our church schools, academies, and colleges are not able to keep pace with our higher than national inflation rate in the field of education. As a result, tuition must be raised disproportionately each year, and it is pricing Christian education out of reach.

What can we do?

First, when others approach you personally or by mail with the latest rumor or scandal about your church, beware. They are spreading deadly poison that is destroying your church. And I fear many who are being shaken out of the church will eventually lose their souls.

Second, when you ask, "Have you heard?" or "What about this or that?" recognize the "stirring the pot," and the possibility that you are a partner with them in creating suspicion and loss of credibility.

Third, and most important, please join those of us who are praying that God will lift us out of this tragic rut and move us forward to fulfill our mission to prepare for the coming of Jesus.

My greatest concern is for the newly baptized members and our youth, who are easy targets for the deceitful and devastating attacks of certain private organizations that destroy confidence in the church and its leadership.

Private organizations challenge God's remnant church.

Let me share an experience that illustrates their bold, determined efforts to secure God's tithe. One leader of a private organization came to my office to protest one of my articles that stated that all of God's tithe should be placed in God's storehouse through the local church treasury.

I asked him why he believed his and other private organizations should benefit from God's tithe. He answered, "Because our conferences are using it incorrectly." I asked, "What do you mean?" He said, "Davenport."

Knowing it wasn't so, I asked, "Can you name a conference that has used tithe for Davenport investments?" It soon became obvious that he could not name a single one, because conferences don't use tithe that way.

Then I responded with concern, "Is it honest to say that Davenport is a reason for not returning tithe to the conference when you cannot name even one confer-

My greatest concern is for the newly baptized members and our youth, who are easy targets for the attacks of certain private organizations.

ence that has used God's tithe for that purpose?" He didn't answer.

Then I said, "What else? What other reason do you have for our members not returning tithe to the conference storehouse?" He said, "Ford preachers in your pulpits." Again I asked, "Can you name any?" He couldn't identify one, not even one.

So I asked again, "Is that honest?" Again, he did not answer. Then I said, "I do not understand how you can say there are 'new theology' pastors in our pulpits when you cannot name any."

Strangely enough, this didn't seem to alter his opinion. And so it is, religious bigotry and fanaticism always believes what it wants to believe regardless of the truth.

And now I ask you, how can you or anyone else believe such things when they obviously are not true? Could it be, as the Bible says, some will be given over to strong delusions so they will actually believe lies? I hope not!

What about celebration churches?

I have encountered similar experiences with criticisms against celebration churches and charges that our pastors are using hypnotism in the pulpit because they received Lab I and II training for winning souls and reclaiming backsliders. Needless to say, this hypnotism allegation is utterly ridiculous.

Actually, I know of only four true self-proclaimed celebration churches in all the North America Division, one on the East Coast and three out West.

Yet the rumor mongers make it sound like celebration churches are spreading

like a plague and have become a major problem to Adventism.

I personally attended the most castigated celebration church in California and found it considerably different from what all the misleading critics claimed was happening. Still some believe what they want to believe, even when it isn't true.

A retired pastor and his wife said to me, "We draw the line when it comes to dancing in the aisles." I answered, "That isn't happening." Yet they were strongly aroused and resisted my statement. Later they attended this famous celebration church, saw for themselves that dancing in the aisles did not occur, and changed their minds.

Also, a leading layman met me in the church lobby one Sabbath to ask, "What has happened to . . . ? When he was our pastor he did not even lean toward celebration worship."

I replied, "Do not believe what you read in the independent publications. They are very misleading." Then I suggested, "The next time you visit out there, go and see for yourself."

Later, when I met him at camp meeting, he said, "Brother Miller, the celebration church wasn't anything like they said it was." So I said, "You need to help others understand and expose the false fund-raising propaganda coming from certain independent organizations."

Do pastors practice mind control?

It is grossly misleading and downright sinful to say that our pastors are practicing hypnotism and mind control from their pulpits. Our dedicated pastors who received Lab I and II training were not taught these things at all. May God help all of us to be factual and honest.

If you meet someone who believes these absurd allegations against our pastors, why not ask this person, "Can you name any?" His/her answer will be either silence or no! Then ask, "Is it honest for you or anyone else to repeat such nonsense just because you read it in a very unreliable independent publication?"

Friends, when we meet people who deliberately raise serious questions about such nonsense, it is a dead giveaway that they are being adversely influenced by those seeking financial support for their private organizations.

You see, leaders of independent ministries have discovered that the more they condemn the church, the more money

they receive. And today they are straining hard, even to the point of absurdity, to cook up new and more sensational issues to harp on! So please be careful, and do not be fooled by the deceptions of their psychological onslaughts.

All of us should earnestly ask God to help us keep our beautiful love relationship with Jesus Christ and His wonderful church. Some obviously are being shaken out of the church by these extremists operating outside the church.

True or false shepherds?

Are you aware that the speakers, writers, and leaders of the so-called independent ministries are not currently licensed or credentialed ministers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church? Also, some very prominent ones have been removed from church membership! They are certainly not role models or safe leaders to follow.

You see, the General Conference does not allow anyone not employed by the church to be licensed to preach or teach in our churches and schools. (This does not include local church elders.) So you can understand why some are so adamant against our pastors and denominational leaders.

Yes, they are on the outside by choice. Yet if they have a valid ministry, they should come inside to give support and not war against the church.

Private organizations do not give financial reports to donors.

Are you aware that these private organizations, previously called independent ministries, are not audited by the General Conference Auditing Service, as all of our conferences and their educational and other institutions are?

They probably are not even audited by an outside auditing firm as required for our Adventist health-care institutions. May I ask, is it safe to give your tithe and offerings to private organizations that operate totally in the dark?

You see, none of these so-called independent ministries reveal how much they pay themselves and their associates, as our conferences do! Who knows what they are doing with the millions of tithe dollars they receive?

The church is an open book.

By contrast, our conferences give monthly annual financial reports so that elected people from our churches and conferences may know and understand

everything that happens and give reports to the churches when needed.

Our conferences also disclose how much money each employee receives for salary, educational, health benefits, and travel expenses.

We are fully open and transparent. This gives our members confidence in the credibility of our duly constituted church organizations. Truly, we are accountable to our members and conference organizations.

Checks and balances.

What controls do independent ministries have to keep self-serving and other financial abuses from developing in their private organizations? How do you know such things are not already occurring? They are accountable to no one!

Does God approve of His tithe being given to a few pious, extremely critical, and divisive persons who operate independently and totally on their own judgment without accountability? No, of course not!

Neither should anyone with sound judgment take such a position. Such a course would not be safe, and furthermore it would not be right. God doesn't work that way. He never has, and never will.

The Sabbath and tithing are a test for God's people.

Do you think God is pleased when we knowingly misdirect our worship to some other day than His holy Sabbath? All true Seventh-day Adventists will give only one answer—no! The Sabbath is a test of our loyalty to God.

Likewise, do you think God is pleased when we as Seventh-day Adventists knowingly misdirect the use of His holy tithe to any other place than His divinely appointed conference storehouse? Again, all true Seventh-day Adventists will give only one answer—no! Tithing is a test of our honesty as God's stewards.

What about Ellen White?

Didn't Ellen White regularly give her tithe to independent ministries? No! Neither did she advocate it. Read the article on Ellen White and her tithe published in the *Adventist Review*, November 7, 1991, and you will discover the truth on this subject.

Please do not be misled by just part of the story. You must have the whole picture to understand it fully. ■

Dissident groups: the threat and the truth

D. Douglas Devnich

The leader of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada offers important counsel beneficial to members around the world.



D. Douglas Devnich is president of the SDA Church in Canada, Oshawa, Ontario. Reprinted with slight editorial changes from the December Canadian Union Messenger.

There are times when one must be totally frank. For some time I have hesitated to write on a certain subject that some have urged upon me.

Recently, however, my participation in a weekend of spiritual emphasis convinced me it is time to address a problem that is tearing out the heart of Adventism and its mission. The local church where I was speaking—and others as well—are being scandalized by dissident “ministries” whose leaders claim that “mainstream” Adventism is in apostasy. These “masquerading ministries” assert themselves as the only ones who still give the “straight testimony,” the only remaining representatives of the “True Witness.”

Consider, for example, this quotation from the journal *Our Firm Foundation* (*OFF*): “What a shaking we face with 6 million members, the majority of whom do not understand the three angels’ messages and the message of the cleansing of the sanctuary” (November 1991).

Even though I admit that we who preach and teach could do better at preaching Jesus Christ in the context of the three angels’ messages and of the sanctuary doctrine, it is irresponsible to allege that the majority of today’s Adventists do not understand this matter of great importance. The implication is that the editorial staff of *OFF* enjoys superior understanding and if anyone wishes to have that esoteric knowledge, he or she must read the journal and give financial support to the *OFF* organization.

Before I go on to share with you some important information about several dissident “splinter groups” that now plague the church, may I give you my personal reasons for having hesitated to address this issue?

1. Gamaliel (Acts 5:34-39), a wise man, suggests that if a cause is of men it will fail, but if it is of God, one would not want to be found opposing it or God.

2. The apostle Paul (Phil. 1:15-18), a spiritual man, advises that if Christ is preached, even from wrong motives, we ought to rejoice.

Now, however, the evidence is clear that several of the leaders of such groups and the writings or tapes they produce do not measure up to the standards of 1 and 2 above. So I choose now to follow Paul’s challenge, as stated in 1 Corinthians 14:7, 8: “If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will any one know what is played? And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle?” (RSV).

As a leader it is my duty to inform the members of our church in Canada of what is causing confusion today in the same way the “speaking in tongues” (babbling) confused the church in Paul’s day.

Many pages could be filled with compelling information that would help Adventists who personally know Jesus Christ to see the importance of dissociating from the dissident leaders and organizations that position themselves as the “true” and the “faithful” guardians of historic Adventism. However, the constraints of space limit me to making only

passing reference to some, while placing emphasis on others.

For your information, Charles Wheeling, who has promoted private teachings and programs, is no longer a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Fellow members of his own local church voted to drop his name from the members' list. The Bible teaches us that the body of believers is able to discern what is true from what is false. I would suggest that Wheeling's former congregation acted prudently.

There is documented evidence that the Prophecy Countdown program directed by John Osborne is a controvertible operation. Documentation indicates serious allegations against the operation and its director. John Osborne was disfellowshipped from the Florida Conference membership for his "apostasy."

I wish now to return to a discussion about the content and methods of the Firm Foundation organization. The September issue of *OFF* carried an article from Ralph Larson entitled "The Tithe Problem—Who Is Responsible?" Careful readers recognized many half-truths therein. Typical of many articles in the *OFF* magazine, it distorts the writings of Ellen G. White to make her say what the *OFF* authors want her to say. On several occasions I have cross-checked the Spirit of Prophecy references with the original text and have found gross misquotations drawn out of context. (This is a phenomenon not limited to dissidents, unfortunately.)

The Ralph Larson article leaves the false impression that E. G. White would approve of individual church members withholding tithe from the local church treasury, preventing it from passing through denominational channels. The Larson article further emphasizes that because of the "unsanctified attitudes" of ministers in the church, members should exercise their individual choice of which ministries they should support with their tithe and offerings. Those ministries are supposedly outside of the organized church.

Now, here is the real tragedy. That article is only a sample of how deceptive *OFF* writings are quite regularly. Unless the readers of *OFF* are vigilant, they will miss the deception. I refer you to the following quotation in full as given in the Larson article:

"God desires to bring men into direct relation with Himself. . . . Every man has

been made a steward of sacred trusts; each is to discharge his trust according to the direction of the Giver; and by each an account of his stewardship must be rendered to God. . . . We are responsible to invest this means ourselves" (*Testimonies*, vol. 7, pp. 176, 177).

If you actually go to volume 7 of the *Testimonies* and read that passage you will find that Ellen G. White does not even use the word "tithe" in her article. The testimony, entitled "The Author" (pp. 176-181), addresses the issue of whether denominational publishing houses should pay royalties to authors of published books and articles. Ellen White's point is that authors should be allowed "to hold the stewardship of their own works."

Larson's use of ellipses (. . .) pulls together sentences that are not connected in the original source. He applies the words "we are responsible to invest this means ourselves" to make Ellen White address the issue of tithe, when in fact she addresses altogether a different issue—that of investing the returns or profits from authorship. In fact, Ellen White doesn't deal with the tithe question at all in that section of the *Testimonies*. So much for the "straight testimony" of *OFF* writers.

Dear brothers and sisters in the church, may I plead with you to consider how serious is the willful intent to mislead on the part of unscrupulous writers and speakers who sanctimoniously criticize others of falsity and apostasy. The very things they accuse others of doing are clearly things they themselves have problems with. Let us be more discerning about who we follow or what we proclaim to be special "light" for this time. Too frequently these merchants of dissension use a veneer of supposed late-breaking prophetic fulfillments to appeal to Adventists to give support to their causes. Repeatedly, fanciful reports of prophecies fulfilled have proved to be hoaxes.

For example, several years ago Jan Marcussen declared with certainty that he had inside information that President Reagan at that moment had on his desk a decree to sign that would enforce a national Sunday law. Church leaders at the General Conference found that to be a false claim, and of course to this day no decree has been signed by either President Reagan or Bush.

In discussing these problems of dissident independent groups, I in no way

claim that the organized church is without fault. I myself do not possess flawless judgment or deportment. However, I know that in this age of confusing, dissident voices it is far safer to commit my resources to God's service when it is directed by councils of trusted men and women, rather than to give support to individual operators who shun accountability to authorized boards and committees.

May God be with us as a church. Shall we not press together and help one another toward the kingdom of heaven? When we know Christ, we can trust that He will lead us personally and help His church to fulfill its divinely ordained purpose. ■

The case of John Osborne has caused much perplexity. He has become famous or notorious for his videos on celebration worship and supposed New Age infiltration into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He has never been ordained as a minister and neither was the Rolling Hills group an organized church.

The Rolling Hills Company was organized in 1987 with John Osborne as lay leader. In June of 1990 the Florida Conference Executive Committee removed Osborne as the lay leader because of his "recent public activity . . . that we feel does not correctly represent the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists."

Conference administration was then given written notice that John Osborne and the Rolling Hills Company refused to accept the committee action. Conference leaders continued to work with this group but found them unyielding. Thus, on November 29, 1990, the Florida Conference Executive Committee disbanded the Rolling Hills Company.

Then on September 29, 1991, the same committee dropped John Osborne from membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church for apostasy. It also voted "to accept the request of Dianne Osborne and Johnny Osborne to be dropped from the Florida Conference Church subject to verification by the conference officers that this is indeed their wish."

So John Osborne was disfellowshipped but his wife and son were kept on the records for the time being. In the meantime the Troy church in Montana voted in all three as members on profession of faith. Montana Conference leaders are now working to rectify that situation.

We will keep you informed as church leaders wrestle with the sometimes difficult task of keeping the balance between diversity and conformity.—Editors.

APPENDIX IX

HARTLAND INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

Hartland
 Health Education Literature

3rd
Global Evangelism Center
 PO Box 1, Rapidan, VA 22733
 (703) 672-3100 (800) 322-9355

April 27, 1992

Time to Act

Dear partner in Christ,

I believe something has to be done and done quickly. The conflict between some in church authority and some members of the church is so great that we must search out God's solutions.

The results of declining credibility include:

1. The members of many churches are tragically divided on a wide range of issues.
2. Some members are no longer prepared to attend church because of the belief that the church is following a pattern inconsistent with the truth and practices of God.
3. There is an increasing degree of suspicion between laity and ministry.
4. There is much politicking for position.
5. The church is focusing more and more upon its internal woes than upon the great mission of taking the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world.
6. For many, there is no certainty on what is truth and a chronic uncertainty of what is true Seventh-day Adventism.

The church once knew its mission. It once had a clear identity. We understood that we were the remnant church of prophecy, that we were called out to take a special message, at a special time, for a special purpose to every inhabitant of the world. Today that vision is at the best blurred, and at worst almost lost.

"... ask for the old paths, where is the good way ..." Jer 6:16

Nothing short of a genuine response to a call to repentance, reformation and revival will refocus the purpose for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, yet we must recognize that this cannot be achieved by a decision of a few leaders. A large mass of the laity must take up true responsibility for their church, seeking to reverse the hierarchical direction of our church management. A reestablishment of the original organization of our church must be sought. This will place the major responsibility in the hands of the local church congregations. Such an organization calls for the refocusing of the local conferences to plan the opening up of the work in areas where Adventism is weak or nonexistent.

Organization
 April 27, 1992
 Page 2

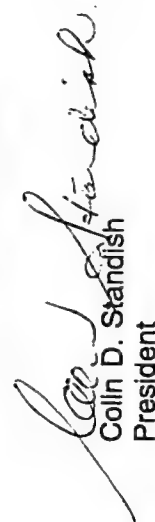
The Role of the Pastor

For the conferences to be able to refocus on the message, there is no question that we have to revise the present work responsibilities of church pastors. There is absolutely no need for the pastors to be burdened with the cares of the local church. The laity have been called to this purpose, the elders to lead the spiritual life of the local churches, the deacons and the deaconesses to care for the physical, emotional and family needs of the church. The pastor's time is far too valuable to be wasted in committees and boards, let alone chairing such committees. In the tapes and videos that are offered this month, we explore the way in which God established our church organization. We look at the legitimate role of the pastor not as church pastor, but as soul-winner and pioneer in new work. The laity have been called to lead the local churches, as these tapes will make clear to you, and they explain how this will strengthen the work of the ministry and strengthen the faith and practice of the laity. Reforms such as these, would lead to harmony and focus upon the message and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church providing a strong platform for unity in truth.

Every effort must be made!

This is so urgent, that every layman and minister needs to take part so that local reorganizations will evolve that will refocus the local conferences, unions and the General Conference. Every effort must be made to reverse the hierarchical direction of our church organization. This series which began in March, is perhaps the most important series that I have ever presented. It represents a call for a total reevaluation of the governance of our church and for the reestablishment of the pattern of God's organization in His church. I hope that you will not only obtain the tapes and videos, but urge others in your sphere of influence to get these so that there can be a wide distribution of them at this time.

Yours in the blessed hope,


 Collin D. Standish
 President

P.S. The signs of the times are all around us. We must be ready both as a church, and as individuals for the coming of the Lord. The revival and reformation we need so desperately is for our hearts as well as the church. Study the materials, and do your part individually to uphold and live the truth as it is in Jesus. All too soon the storm will be upon us, and only by the grace of Jesus will we stand through it.



3rd
Global Evangelism Center
PO Box 1, Rapidan, VA 22733
(703) 672-3100 (800) 322-9355

May 29, 1992

RUSSIA!

We all have been thrilled by the opportunities for gospel proclamation opening so rapidly in Russia and the other former Soviet republics. But what is really going on over there? What is the real story? This month Hartland Board Member Stephen Dickie reports on his two recent trips to the former Soviet Union.

The K.G.B.?

Large sums of money have been raised, much literature has been sent, many evangelistic crusades have been conducted, the building of a publishing house has been commenced, and a seminary is now functioning. But in spite of all the publicity, many nagging and worrying questions have been raised such as:

- * Does the K.G.B. have any influence in our Church today?
- * Was the Seventh-day Adventist Church infiltrated by the K.G.B.?
- * What has happened to the underground True and Free Seventh-day Adventist Church?
- * Do most of our members send their children to school on Sabbath?
- * Are the American and Western European evangelists presenting the three angels' messages to the people?
- * What kind of literature and Bible studies are now being scattered in Russia?
- * What kind of materials and persons are needed to take advantage of the opening providences of God?
- * Are we likely to see deeper convictions among the new converts than those of the past?

After years of deprivation, these people have access to the gospel. We must be certain that they are getting the truth and that they are warned with the complete message for this time.

SDA Bible Studies Without Revelation 13 & 14?

Stephen Dickie travelled to the former Soviet Union to make sure that the full message Bible Studies that had been prepared in the Russian language would be distributed to the Russian population without any deletions or alterations. There were strong endeavors by some leaders to delete those studies dealing with Revelation 13 and 14. It was hard for Stephen to grasp this. After all, Revelation 14 declares the everlasting gospel--the only gospel that every human being will ever hear--the one that will be proclaimed to every nation kindred, tongue and people. Surely this includes the former Soviet Union.

RUSSIA
May 29, 1992
Page 2

First Hand Report

While in the former Soviet Union, Stephen talked to lay people, union and conference leaders and pastors; often staying with them in their homes seeking to establish the real situation. It is from this first-hand experience that Stephen presents this riveting two hour special report, available on either audio or video.

A Very Special Book

With the tapes we are offering the book "True Witness" with which few Americans are familiar, but which has pricked the consciences of many people in the free world. Keston College in England for decades has researched the plight of faithful underground churches in the Soviet Union. They have thoroughly detailed the faithfulness of many Seventh-day Adventists over there both in the above ground and the underground Seventh-day Adventist Church. This reveals the terrible persecution of God's faithful for the 70 years of terror in that country. It gives a little insight as to what we will have to face very soon, how the K.G.B. broke down some who became informers and the inhuman treatment of men and women whose only desire was to be loyal in service to their God. This is a book by non-Adventists who yet uphold the wonderful endurance of a people under a persecuting regime that can hardly be imagined.

May God bless you in your ministry for Him in these last days.

Yours to hasten His coming,


Colin D. Standish
President

P.S. Again this month I decided that the current topic had to be made available to you without delay. I have already held back the next two parts of the "Church Organization" series that was offered in March of this year. The church organization issues taken up in that series are crucial to us as a people, and the church at this point in history. I mentioned in an earlier letter that I believe that that series is the most important series I've ever taped. I still believe that. This month, even though the Russia tape is available, I am making the next two parts of "Church Organization" available as well. I urge you to study these materials and share them while time lasts.

P.P.S. Don't forget to plan on coming to the 5th Annual Hartland Old Fashioned Family Bible Campmeeting starting July 29 through August 2nd. Speakers include Joe Crews, Ron Spear, John Grosboll, Colin Standish, Hal Mayer, Ron Goss, Ray DeCarlo, and more. We are praying for the Holy Spirit to be here in abundance, we pray you will too.

Yes Colin, I want to help re-establish the God-given principles of church government.

Name: _____ <<Please Print>>

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: (_____) _____

I am giving a donation of:

- ☐ \$ 5 or more, and I would like a copy of the **booklet**, "1901 Rejected" by Deonne Hansen.
- ☐ \$ 8 or more, and I would like a copy of the **book** "Authority In God's Church" by Vernon Sparks.
- ☐ \$ 8 or more, and I would like the second two **audio** tapes of the series on "Church Organization" by Colin Standish.
- ☐ \$15 or more, and I would like the second **video** on "Church Organization" by Colin Standish.
- ☐ \$30 or more, and I would like the **SPECIAL!** (all the material offered this month)
- ☐ I would like the list of **previously offered material**.

Yes Colin, I want to know about the events in **RUSSIA!**

[205]

Name: _____ <<Please Print>>

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: (_____) _____

I am giving a donation of:

- ☐ \$15 or more, and I would like the **book** "True Witness" by the Keston College in England.
- ☐ \$10 or more, and I would like the two **audio** tapes by Stephen Dickie on his **Special Report on the Former Soviet Union**.
- ☐ \$20 or more, and I would like the **video** by Stephen Dickie on his **Special Report on the Former Soviet Union**.
- ☐ \$40 or more, and I would like **ALL THE MATERIAL OFFERED THIS MONTH**.
- ☐ I would like to give an additional donation to support God's work \$ _____

Your Address

THANK YOU
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APPENDIX X

ORGANIZATION OF LOCAL CONGREGATIONS

Wichita Seventh-day Adventist Church South

820 West 27th Street South • Wichita, Kansas 67217-3018 • 316 264 2665 • Chief Shepherd: Jesus Christ

July 13, 1992

JUL 20 1992

Elder Gary B. Patterson
General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
North American Division
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Springs, Maryland, 20904-6600

Dear Bob:

I received your notification that I was appointed to the Background and Principles for a Study of Some Private Ministries Ad Hoc Steering Committee. Thank you for this appointment and I accept.

I have read the minutes of your two previous meetings, and I would suggest adding the work of Step to Life, headed by Dr. John Grosboll to your discussion agenda. At this point it is clear to me, Steps to Life has organized itself as a congregational style church separate from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Consider these characteristics that when taken together show this is an independent congregational, Sabbath keeping church.

- Steps to Life appoints its own leaders, staff and defines its own mission independently and without consultation with SDA leadership.
- It has its own 5013C religious non-profit certification from the government.
- It accepts tithes and offerings for the support of its work without audit or input from the SDA Church.
- Its ministers baptize and evangelize not only in Wichita but around the world.
- It conducts what it calls "The Institute of Ministry" which trains lay SDA members to give Bible studies, preach, teach and evangelize. These trained people become supporters of Steps to Life's goals and programs.
- It conducts annual camp meetings in Wichita and other areas in the USA.
- It teaches that the SDA denomination is in deep apostasy. Many within Steps to Life feel that the SDA church has become one of the daughters of Babylon.
- It claims its members constitute the true historic Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- It has its own television program on Fox T.V. 24 every Sunday morning.
- It has its own Steps to Life Bible guides and correspondence school.
- It has organized at least two congregations in Kansas. One calls itself the Steps to Life Seventh-day Adventist Church and the other the Winfield Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- It is tied to Hartland and Hope International through interlocking directorates, but it has no denominational ties.
- It prints its own literature for both nurture and evangelism.

Matthew 9:37, 38

- It defines its own doctrines including the nature of Christ, Sabbath keeping, the SDA experience at 1888 General Conference. Especially Steps to Life has developed a doctrine of the church (ecclesiology) that is in opposition to the SDA position.
- It seeks sympathizers in every church in Kansas and recruits students in Kansas and throughout North America.
- It is critical and not supportive of SDA denominational leadership and churches.
- It does not seek counsel from denominational leadership. It is in fact in rebellion against denominational authority.
- It accepts members into these churches from SDA churches.
- Now it has ordained three to the gospel ministry to serve the people in these independent, congregational churches.
- So far Steps to Life leaders have refused to meeting with Elders Joel Tompkins, Jim Hoehn and Larry Pitcher to discuss their recent ordination service at a Steps to Life camp meeting. It was suggested by Dr. John-Grosboll to Elder Jim Hoehn, that he read their printed material and that should be sufficient information for him.

While some loyal SDA Churches practice some of these activities, they do so in cooperation with and support of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. However, as Steps to Life practices them, it is clear to me that it is an independent, congregational, church that has separated itself from the SDA denomination. Steps to Life people should be treated as we would treat members of the Seventh Day Baptist or Wide World Church of God denominations. We should love them. Attempt to reclaimed them. But they are not Seventh-day Adventist.

Your friend,

Larry Pitcher, Pastor
Wichita Seventh-day Adventist Church South

APPENDIX XI

WASHINGTON CONFERENCE CONCERNS

-2-

First of all, let us speak from the conference point of view. We would not want to question Ron Spear's sincerity. We, with other leaders, have met together with Ron and others from Hope International for long periods of prayer and discussion over the past three and one-half years. Some of us have visited the headquarters at Eatonville and met some earnest and sincere people. Furthermore, some of the material which comes out of Hope is, in our opinion, a needed emphasis and needs to be "said". However, if we are going to be honest and accountable to the working of the Holy Spirit upon the organized church in western Washington and other leaders in the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, we must make some further statements with a heavy heart.

We get inquiries about Hope since the headquarters is in our geographic area. The facts are that "the Hope work" is carried on in many places and is perceived in many of these places as being a point of distress.

Let us try to summarize some of the problems coming from counsel and as brought to our attention by many lay individuals and church leaders.

1. Up to this point, Hope International has not seen fit to relate positively to the voted guidelines for independent ministries. Many people believe that it should be possible for a work outside the organized church, such as Hope International, to function under these guidelines; in fact, many specialized ministries do that very thing. They find that the principles of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy call for order and organization.

2. Returning tithe to the storehouse, it appears, has been a problem for Hope International. Over four years ago this was brought to the attention of Ron Spear and other Hope leaders by the conference president at that time, Bruce Johnston, and others. Their practice statement was asked for then and has been repeatedly since; yet, basically the practice as well as counsel remains unclear.

It does not seem appropriate to the church leaders and others to argue that early in our church history, Ellen White took some of her tithe and used it for a special work. Those were very special circumstances that do not exist now. No leader that we know of has the authority of Ellen White to function in that manner.

Furthermore, to argue that ministers are employed by Hope is just not appropriate. Ron Spear does not carry current credentials from any entity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Our early leaders came up with a practice of issuing credentials so churches would know who has authority to function in the body. It seems important to many people who write to us that now is not at all the time to take lightly the practice of functioning with valid credentials when one

20015 Bothell Way S.E.
Bothell, Washington 98012
206-481-7171

Washington Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

September, 1990

A SHARING FROM THE HEART RELATIVE TO INDEPENDENT WORK/RON SPEAR

This little paper is the product of many hours of prayer, study and counsel. It has been reviewed and supported by the North Pacific Union Conference officers and the Washington Conference Executive Committee. In fairness we have also sent a copy of this to Ron Spear.

From the earliest days of the Christian church, the Lord, in His Word, revealed certain ways of functioning and certain principles of governance. The Spirit of Prophecy enlarged upon this and spoke often of the nature and function of the church. We must remember Jesus' prayer during the last part of His time on this earth. His passion was for unity. The Spirit of Prophecy, over and over again, urges God's people to "press together, press together, press together."

We also remember that many of the Bible epistles were letters written to churches, giving instruction on church function as well as other theological points.

An area that seems to need special emphasis right now involves the nature and authority of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Ever since God established the New Testament church, there have been individuals who have sought to lead or instruct the church. It appears that some of these people were sincere, yet God arranged a procedure that involves one's accountability to the body of believers. Apparently, God saw safety and wisdom in this method. Note how it was practiced in the book of Acts, for example, concerning the experience of the Jerusalem Council; e.g., Acts 15.

Now, in our day, when the church is in need of guidance and when society is breaking up into little individual interest groups, we should not be surprised to see fragmentation among God's people. Sincere people will have a temptation to go their own way or to function in a way outside of God's plan of church governance. Now it does appear to many church leaders and lay people today that the organized church needs to correct certain procedures and to give attention to certain items, but it also must be remembered that it is not appropriate to circumvent God's principles and plans for church function and organization.

With the above points in mind, it seems appropriate to share some comments relative to the work of Ron Spear, Our Firm Foundation, and Hope International. These observations are based on General Conference, union, and local conference counsel and personal study.

claims or tries to be a leading minister in the Adventist Church and to have authority to live off the tithe. It appears to many that if Hope International wants to be a specialized ministry, it should function with self-supporting practices and offerings apart from the tithe.

3. Balanced ministry. This appears to be causing the most concern around the world. It is an unbalanced approach that Hope takes and the fruitage of that approach must be looked at. This is the hardest point to write about; yet it might be the easiest to correct.

In letters to the Washington Conference, Ron says that he counsels his hearers to stay in the church, but pastors and other leaders say that serious tensions and division develop where Spear's supporters attend. They say that often there is a loss of the sweet spirit of Jesus' love and that witnessing almost ceases. When we attended the GC Session, there were a few who expressed appreciation for some of the things that Hope was doing. However, sad to say, pastor after pastor, and church leader after church leader, even a division president, expressed deep concern that, while some of the messages from Hope were needed, basically the messages were incomplete and unbalanced. Further, an incorrect motivation was used for behavior correction. The fear and doom dominance along with unbalanced perfectionist emphasis was not our Lord's method or expanded on as one considers the whole of Ellen White's counsel. Also, the fruitage of the work, while doing some good, in the long run, resulted in the manifestation of a critical spirit, lack of soul winning, and acts of functioning outside of God's principles and practices for church governance.

It is not left with us alone to issue judgment, but, as shepherds, to share answers to questions as we see them and to summarize items that the church body articulates. This is our responsibility. We have studied a great deal about the subject of how God wants His church to function today. Several quotes from the Spirit of Prophecy come to mind to picture the balance that we believe needs to be present in Hope's work or other such endeavors.

Christ's Object Lessons, page 97, "The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely--because he is required to do so--will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a

Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right--because right doing is pleasing to God."

Notice how love is to be uplifted, not the fearful threatenings of the future and the "sins" of every group or person made the main feature.

In Vol 2, page 118 and onward is a section, titled "Look to Jesus." There is a straight message given. The servant of the Lord asked a pointed question on pages 121-122, "Should it be necessary that the terrors of the day of God be held before us in order to compel us to right action?" She seems to answer the question by giving the case of Enoch who "trained his mind to devotion, to love purity. His conversation was upon heavenly things."

The chapter in Steps to Christ called "The Sinners Need of Christ" seems to give the right method. Note particularly page 21:3 and the various motives to be used.

"Oh, let us contemplate the amazing sacrifice that has been made for us! Let us try to appreciate the labor and energy that Heaven is expending to reclaim the lost and bring them back to the Father's house. Motives stronger, and agencies more powerful, could never be brought into operation; the exceeding rewards for right-doing, the enjoyment of heaven, the society of the angels, the communion and love of God and His Son, the elevation and extension of all our powers throughout eternal ages -- are these not mighty incentives and encouragements to urge us to give the heart's loving service to our Creator and Redeemer?" SC, 21.

It is true that serious times are ahead but many sincere spiritual leaders believe that it is a violation of the counsel of God's servant to use only certain segments of that counsel.

So what can a sincere person do:

1. Pray for yourself to have a complete understanding of how God's church is to function today. This is not the time to go out on your own. Be careful not to embrace one part of God's truth while rejecting another whole segment.
2. Pray for the leaders of God's organized church.
3. Pray for Ron Spear and his staff. Urge them to make efforts to follow "gospel order," to have a balanced approach to their work. Personally, we would love to see the total efforts and talents at Hope International focused toward a finished work.

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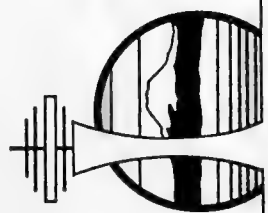
4. Further contacts or questions should be directed to your local pastor, your local conference, or union and GC leaders. It is not our sole responsibility to settle this issue or legislate solutions. Unfortunately, we have tried, as did others, for over four years to appeal and give counsel to Hope International. Now they have received letters from division, union and local conference officers expressing disapproval. This is a very serious matter. Unless you believe that God has completely forsaken the organized SDA church, then you will want to urge Hope International to function as a balanced Seventh-day Adventist work. There should be a place for them to function as many other specialized ministries do, yet cooperate with the organized church.

We personally remain optimistic. We believe God's church will go through. We do not speak for all leaders, but for our conference officers and almost all of our pastors, as well as our Conference Executive Committee. We will continue to press together to seek the Holy Spirit, to endeavor to answer the prayer of John 17, and to fulfill the gospel commission with those who wish to function as a balanced SDA army.

We repeat, please work through your appropriate local leaders. We here in Western Washington love people; but it would be a disregard of Biblical leadership for us to give counsel and instruction to every individual who writes about certain matters. The North American Division of our church has given counsel to the body and to those who wish to know how to evaluate various efforts being put forth. The eleven guidelines serve that purpose.

The organized church has laid many other heavy responsibilities upon us. Even local church leaders have to consider how much time they give to this particular question of independent efforts. We have the work of Matthew 28:19, 20 to do. Let us be up and doing it.

--Washington Conference Administrative Officers



20015 Bothell Way S.E.
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Washington Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

March 12, 1991

Elder Robert Dale, Secretary
North American Division
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring MD 20904-6600

Dear Bob:

I have had an opportunity to share with Elder Jaacks the report of your recent visit to Hope International and your discussions with Ron Spear and his associates. Certainly we are hopeful that your counsel will be taken to heart and that there would be a radical change in their very attitude toward the church.

In counseling again with our pastor in Yelm, Rick Jordan, together with our own experiences here, we wonder how an institution whose very basis is criticism of the church and a perfectionistic, holier-than-thou attitude toward its leadership can change those basic dynamics and be something entirely different. It would have to be a dramatic conversion in every sense of the word.

On the local church level and here in the conference we are moving toward church discipline. The local churches have taken the lead on these issues because, of course, that is their responsibility; but we have advised them to wait until we can all move together on this.

The letters of disapproval of nearly a year ago from the division, the union and the local conference are still unanswered by Ron Spear. The divisive tactics of those who are associated with him continue unabated. Hope International continues to accept tithes from Seventh-day Adventists, and we basically see no change in their approach or their thinking.

Because of these issues, it seems to us that the time is approaching when church discipline would be appropriate. Your recent visit there can certainly be seen as the last opportunity for Hope International to make substantive change in their approach and thinking. We are concerned, though, that your visit there can be used by them to delay the process. I could very easily see them as using your visit as a justification of their position or an opportunity for them to say that they are thinking about how they can cooperate. From this basis they could easily say that they are willing to work with the church. This would make it more difficult for us to maintain the clarity of our position and move toward church discipline, which we think is entirely in order.

Elder Robert Dale
March 12, 1991
Page 2

As you know, we have always thought that the people who are connected with Hope International are violating the divisive movement part of the church discipline counsel in the Church Manual, but we have agreed with the local churches that they would not move in that direction until we had some further counsel from the division and the union and, of course, from us on the local conference level. The disapproval letters of last spring really are the basis for that; and since we have had no response from them, it would seem to us that now is the time to advise that disciplinary action could be appropriate.

In that context, your letter to Ron Spear as a follow up to your visit will be very important. We anticipate copies of that letter and hope that it will certainly reflect the straight counsel that you gave to him on your visit of February 13 and 14 of this year.

I may have indicated to you in our recent phone conversation that we learned of your visit to Hope International from Rick Jordan, our local pastor, who had heard it from one of his members who is connected with Hope International. This brings up the whole matter of protocol and the matter of the opportunity to share perspectives and information so that we are all a part of the strategy discussions prior to any contact with Hope International from any level of administration. We would be interested in having articulated to us the strategy that may have been discussed on the division level and whether or not you feel it was accomplished by your visit.

We look forward to further consultation together on this very serious matter.

Sincerely,

Dennis N. Carlson
Executive Secretary

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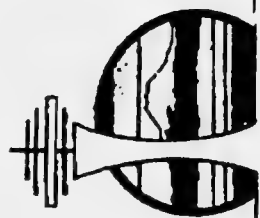
cc Lenard Jaacks
Rick Jordan

N PACIFIC UNION 503-253-2455 Mar 23.92 13:55 No.015 P.01

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20015 Bolheli Way S.E.
Bothell, Washington 98012
206-481-1171

MAR 23 1992



Washington Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

March 17, 1992

Elder Bruce Johnston, President
North Pacific Union Conference
PO Box 16677
Portland OR 97216

Post-it brand fax transmittal memo 7671 # of pages 2	
To: Bob Dale	From: Bruce Johnston
Co. NAD	Co. NPUC
Dist. Vice Pres.	Phone #
Fax # 503/680-6464	Fax # 503/253-2455

Dear Elder Johnston:

I was curious to see the title of an article in the latest Our Firm Foundation magazine. The title of that article is "Are You a Member of the Church." I was wondering how Hope International would handle the matter of church memberships because of the difficulty of retaining membership in various Adventist churches on the part of some of the high profile independent ministry leaders and the point of statements that we have made to Hope International leaders over the year that, in our opinion, they are members of a divisive and disloyal organization and, therefore, subject to church discipline. They are having to establish some "theological" position for the eventuality when they do not hold membership in an organized Seventh-day Adventist church.

The article in Vol.7, No.3 by John Grosboll is a thinly veiled position paper, in my opinion, which basically says that true membership in "the church" is based upon being a part of the body of Christ, which in turn is based upon the legalistic views that Hope International represents. It would seem to me that this paper is setting forth the idea that even though you are disfellowshipped from the Adventist church, you are a member of the true church, the body of Christ.

One further very radical position is clearly stated in the following quotations from the article. "Do you realize that if you disfellowship someone who is following and holding the banner of Christ and is faithful to the faith once delivered to the saints, you have actually disfellowshipped yourself," and "There are Seventh-day Adventists in various parts of the world who, by disfellowshipping those who are part of the body of Christ, are telling the whole universe they are on the devil's side of the great controversy," and "Do you want to be a part of that group who will have the fellowship with the mystery and will reveal the manifold wisdom of God to the whole universe? It is the greatest privilege in the world, and nobody can take it away from you if you are a part of the body of Christ--if you have been baptized by the Holy Spirit, if you are keeping God's commandments and if you are living according to the Spirit of Prophecy. My greatest desire is to be a part of that group."

Elder Bruce Johnston
March 17, 1992
Page 2

The article makes various statements that there are many in the church who are not really connected with Christ. That emphasis along with an emphasis on keeping the commandments and living according to the Spirit of Prophecy are certainly positive points that we would agree with as a denomination. But here again is an example of taking some of the most precious parts of our faith and turning it against the church.

I see another typical tactic in this article that we have seen many times on the part of independent ministry leaders, which is to favorably compare the independent ministry person with the faithful people of the Scriptures or history, such as the Waldenses, and to compare the organized church with Roman Catholicism or the Jewish church of Christ's day.

Another question I have in my mind concerning the direction of Hope International and perhaps other independent ministries has to do with the baptism of the Holy Spirit and holiness. I don't have enough evidence to make any conclusions at this time, but the question is in my mind as to whether or not these people may be moving away from the balance of the gospel to the degree that they will move into a kind of theology that would be similar to the charismatic movement and, of course, is indeed quite similar to Roman Catholic theology, which is the perfection of the human. Is it possible, I wonder, that independent ministries leaders are realizing that a legalistic, heavy laden legalism does not perfect humanity and, therefore, are moving from that position to a seeking of the perfection of the human being by the infusion of grace through an emphasis on the baptism of the Holy Spirit and holiness.

Again, I am impressed with the marvelous balance of the understanding of the gospel that we as Seventh-day Adventist Christians have, and it appears that any deviation from that leads to a fundamental and basic disorientation of spiritual life.

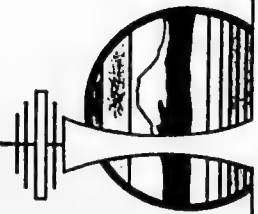
Again, thank you for your leadership in this crucial matter.

Sincerely,

Dennis N. Carlson
Executive Secretary

ts

cc Lenard Jaacks



APR 2

20015 Bothell Way S.E.
Bothell, Washington 98012
206-481-7171

Washington Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

April 23, 1991
(Dictated April 22)

Elder Robert S. Folkenberg
Elder Alfred C. McClure
✓ Elder Robert L. Dale
General Conference of SDA
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring MD 20904-6600

Dear Brothers:

Help! Help! Help!

I really don't like these letters that are sent to multiple people; yet, I have to say very honestly, in some degree or other all three of you men were involved in the Hope International situation. We are trying to deal with the challenge in the best way that we can, but we have requested help. From our point of view, it is not coming.

Let me say kindly that there are many questions as to what really happened at the spring meeting. The first item on the agenda was Bob Folkenberg with independent ministries. My understanding is that it was not even discussed.

Number two, regarding the special committee that Al convened, we were told there would be some report by the spring meeting.

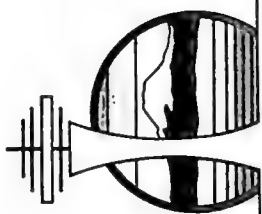
And number three, Brother Dale made a visit to Hope International without our knowing anything about it before the visit, and we have had very little communication since.

Now again, men, you know me well enough to realize I am expressing some of the things that we are wrestling with and will appreciate advice, counsel and support.

Sincerely, your friend in Christ,


Lenard D. Jaecks
President
ah

cc: Dennis N. Carlson
Rick Jordan
Rod Scherencel



JUN 07 1991

20015 Bothell Way S.E.
Bothell, Washington 98012
206-481-7171

Washington Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

June 3, 1991

Elder Robert Dale
General Conference of SDA
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring MD 20904-1608

Dear Bob:

Just a note to discuss with you some of my thoughts with regard to the intended visit that you and I would have with leaders of Hope International.

First of all, I'm wondering about the specific timing of these meetings. I don't recall exactly, when we visited together at the recent union session, whether you see this as a visit that would happen in mid-June or whether we would be working together in mid-June on the conduct and content of the visit and then be setting a meeting with the Hope International leaders for further in the future.

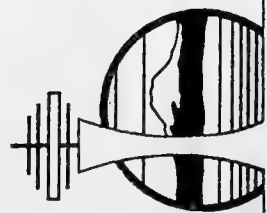
If we plan to meet in mid-June with them, we certainly need to get our thoughts and our ideas together very quickly and counsel with the pastors here in regard to what we would say.

Thank you for initiating this matter. As you know, Elder Jaecks is in favor of this visit, and he wants to be sure to have input on the process and in the content of what we say and do there. Thank you.

Sincerely,


Dennis N. Carlson
Executive Secretary

ts



20015 Bothell Way S.E.
Bothell, Washington 98012
206-481-7171

Washington Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

TO Private Ministries Ad Hoc Committee NAD

FROM Dennis N. Carlson, Executive Secretary

DATE June 4, 1992

SUBJECT The Impact of Hope International--the current status in the Washington Conference

The impact of Hope International on the Washington Conference at the present time is told in the recent letters from the pastors of the several churches who are most affected by personnel from Hope International.

Among the ways the churches and membership of the Washington Conference have been affected are: Confidence in the denomination is shaken or destroyed. Loyalty to the church is seriously deteriorated. Evangelism has been made more difficult. Churches have been disturbed and divided. Spiritual life has been affected. And a few pastors have had to deal with this on a daily basis.

There has been very little contact between Washington Conference administration and leadership at Hope International concerning the issues at hand since 1989. But a significant amount of administrative time has been spent on Hope International issues over the past several years in giving counsel, visiting boards, answering questions, dialoguing with Hope International leaders and analyzing the issues. But it must be emphasized that during this same time the work of the conference has advanced in education, evangelism, church planting and all other areas of church life.

This is not to minimize the significance of the issues involved and the impact of Hope International on the churches of the Washington Conference, but it is to say that we have not been "sitting on our hands" during the process toward closure on this issue.

Essentially, the position of Washington Conference administration remains the same, which is that we see the work of Hope International as led by Ron Spear to be a divisive and disloyal organization to the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. We have made that statement clearly and personally to Ron Spear, also indicating at the same time that, in our opinion, those who are associated with his work could and should be considered for church discipline according to the Church Manual.

We also stated that our advice to the churches in our conference would be that no actions on membership be taken in our churches until we have definitive counsel from the General Conference and the North American

Ad Hoc Committee
June 4, 1992
Page 2

Division. We also have requested our churches to not transfer in anyone who works at and/or lives at Hope International. That stand was really a supportive one after the Yelm Church board voted not to receive any more Hope International people into the membership of that church. We supported that action and advised that that be a conference-wide practice. The counsel stands at the current time.

We have, over the past several years, received numerous phone calls from pastors and administrators requesting some information on Ron Spear and Hope International. To respond to these inquiries we send a basic letter which Lenard Jaacks composed and is attached to this letter.

Obviously, the work of Hope International is indeed international. It affects the world field. Thus the assessment of the impact of Hope International on the Washington Conference is both typical of the world field and only a small part of the impact of Hope International on the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.

Over the past four or five years, we have in the Washington Conference spent considerable time in analysis of the message of Hope International as led by Ron Spear. We are pleased that the understanding that has come clear to us is also clear to leaders at the General Conference and around the world, and we are much encouraged by the considerations now in process to bring closure to this problem in our denomination. We look forward with anticipation to definitive counsel which then can be the basis for counsel which we will pass along to the pastors and church boards affected by Hope International individuals in the Washington Conference.

cc Bob Dale
Lenard Jaacks
Bruce Johnston

May 25, 1992

Elder Dennis N. Carlson
Washington Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
20015 Bothell-Everett Highway SE.
Bothell, WA 98328-

Dear Dennis,

To aid in your evaluation of how Hope International has affected the local congregations of this conference I would like to share with you the following summary, including several illustrative incidents, from my own personal experience with individuals from this independent ministry.

When in Spring of 1989 I accepted the call to pastor Graham Church, just twelve miles north of Hope International's campus, I, having had only casual encounters with their people, knew very little about them. This, however, rapidly changed. Before I had even accepted the call members of their organization got wind that I was moving to Graham and began bringing me oceans of written material that I soon learned was intended to shape my good will toward their organization so that I would become instrumental in influencing the church's acceptance of them.

I found the people associated with Hope to appear very genuine, almost fanatic, in their desire to serve God. To this day I consider many of them to be dear friends. However, that some of them would go to such great ends to convince me that they are acceptable caused me to react with cautious concern. Soon I had accumulated a file fully 2 inches thick of information given to me by people from Hope International. I was given copies of letters to and from various local and upper conference level church leaders and numerous articles refuting church leadership counsel and guidelines regarding independent ministries.

When I arrived at Graham I discovered a church with two distinct factions that were directly opposed to one another. The church board had given a great deal of attention to allegations and innuendoes made by Hope people; ultimately voting that no person from Hope International be permitted to take an office or perform in a position of public leadership until the issue of the organization's acceptance or rejection can be considered by a more far reaching church entity.

Specific incidents that lead to this action and to a very strong position by pastor, elders and other church leaders can be best illustrated by example. On one Sabbath a small group of people from Hope International was overheard explaining to a non-Seventh-day Adventist interest that the church has apostatized. People from Hope attended evangelistic meetings and invited non-member interests to visit Hope International, infecting them with the idea that there is something wrong with the mainstream body of the church. This, of course, makes preparing people to become members of the Seventh-day Adventist church body very difficult.

A campaign was launched by several church members from Hope International who used access to church lists to mail letters of concern and dissent to every listed member. Some of these letters fell into hands of non-Adventist spouses to whom embarrassing explanations needed be offered. A spirit of negativism toward the organized church was continually expressed in Sabbath School classes, fellowship visits and during pastoral visits. There was a constant undercurrent of dissatisfaction, irritation and disgruntlement among the church members.

By early 1990 attendance at Graham by people from Hope International began to dwindle to only occasional visits from people who did not vocalize personal negative feelings. I believe this was primarily due to the unbending position taken by the pastor and church board. At the same time the atmosphere of the Graham church began to grow noticeably more and more positive. I believe the two phenomena are directly related.

At present I could easily state that, since Hope International personnel have stopped attending at Graham and since all sympathizers of Hope International have moved their memberships to adjoining churches or simply do not attend we have recorded an absolute change for the better in the atmosphere of the overall church body as contrasted with when Hope persons and sympathizers did attend. The difference is dramatically astounding.

I would like to clearly state the pastor's position toward this organization and its people. While some of the Hope leaders appear to be acting knowingly in direct defiance to church counsel and against unity and harmony with the church, a few persons working for the organization seem to be naively "taken in." While many of the people at Hope International are wonderful, loving individuals who are not only welcome, but encouraged to attend the Graham Church, and while it can be granted that there will always be changes that could be adopted for the advancement of our organized work; the philosophies and methods to accomplish these changes, as exhibited by the Hope International organization in Graham have caused devastating damage to the church. Because of this track record these theologies and expressly the methods particular to that group are not welcome in Graham.

Dennis, please feel free to share, with some judgment of course, this letter with those who are working toward resolution of this situation. I am available for further comment at my home phone (206) 832-8745 or church office (206) 847-1759.

Sincerely,



Rod Scherencel
Pastor, Graham Seventh-day Adventist Church
10019 Campbell Lane
Eatonville, WA 98328



MAY 25 1992

We thank the Conference for your support in this difficult matter. Be assured that the Puyallup Church will continue to support the Conference in its guidance on this matter.

Sincerely,

Larry Zuchowski
Pastor

May 25, 1992

Dennis Carlson
20015 Bothell-Everett Hwy
Bothell, WA 98012-7198

Dear Elder Carlson:

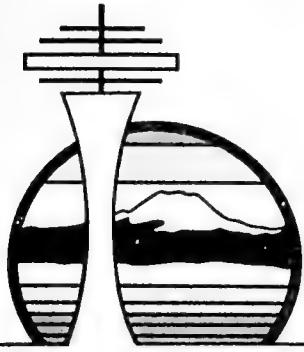
I am writing to inform you of the current status of Hope International in relationship to the Puyallup Church.

As you know, about two years ago there were approximately thirty people from Hope International attending the Puyallup Church. When one family applied for membership, our board had to make a decision. Our Church Board voted that until Hope was once again considered a faithful supporter of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that we would not accept any of their employees as members of our local church. In addition, employees from Hope were not to perform any functions within our church body.

During the time when the people from Hope were attending, there were several occasions when they disrupted Sabbath School Classes with their insistence on speaking about topics that were not part of the lesson for that day. Also, on a Communion Sabbath, one of our members heard an employee from Hope say "that they were going to do everything they could to get a foothold in the Puyallup Church."

All these incidents put a stress on our congregation. Fortunately, with 500 members in our church, Hope International was unable to make much headway.

After the board took its action, the people from Hope slowly stopped attending, although from time to time there are people who still attend our church on Sabbath. Recently, some of their young people disrupted our Youth Sabbath School, again, with the insistence of discussing whether or not we can overcome sin in our lives. Our Associate Pastor, David Oakley, was in the Youth Sabbath School that morning and handled the situation very appropriately.



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Washington Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

October 8, 1991

Elder Robert Dale
North American Division
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring MD 20904-6600

Dear Bob:

You will find attached a letter from Rod Scherencel, pastor of the Graham Church here in the Washington Conference, one of the churches that is most heavily impacted by the influences of Hope International. Elder Scherencel is doing an excellent job standing firm against the influence that these people from Hope International bring against the Graham Church.

As you can see in his letter, he is requesting with all earnestness that some decisive decision be made on a church-wide basis so that the Graham Church can deal effectively and conclusively with at least the membership held in his church, which number three or four, which would then also be a basis for dealing with the people who attend services and are endeavoring to influence the people of his church against the organization.

I wanted you to have a copy of this letter from Elder Scherencel as soon as possible.

Thank you again for your work in bringing the issues clearly to the other world leaders who are considering these matters.

Sincerely,

Dennis N. Carlson
Executive Secretary

ts
Encls.

cc Lenard Jaecks

September 30, 1991

Elder Dennis Carlson
Washington Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists
20015 Bothel-Everett Highway
Bothell, WA 98012

Dear Dennis;

This is an URGENT APPEAL for your IMMEDIATE HELP regarding HOPE INTERNATIONAL!

For more than two years this church has been imploring the Washington Conference to give us some counsel and backing to conclude our position regarding Hope International and deal kindly yet decisively with the people associated with that organization.

The initial effort from the Washington Conference office and North Pacific Union was admirable. Elders Jaacks', Wesson's and your agonizing hours of preparation and dialogue with the leaders at Hope defined the issues at which they are at odds with the church. The eleven guidelines for independent ministries provided us a concrete tool for defense of the church. But now, while we await word from some far removed authority whose full awareness of what we face here at the source of this problem is questionable, the people from Hope regularly drag us from the productive work of evangelizing this ripe community by thrusting unnecessary, unwelcome demands and challenges onto our ministry as they prey most heavily on the youngest or weakest of members and on non-member interests.

They attend my public evangelistic meetings inviting my interests to their facility. They endeavor to persuade church members and interests that the church has apostacized and urge them to not tithe through the organized church. (Conveniently they can suggest an alternative organization who will accept tithe.) They mail devisive letters and literature to the entire membership list; including young and backslidden members, claiming that the members of the church have a right to decide the issues for themselves. And they openly, defiantly challenge and undercut the authority of church leaders. They began attending services here en-mass while I

page two

was away holding my Malaysian crusade this summer. It now appears they, once again, are concentrating efforts in my congregation. This makes me very anxious that we will lose the calm and directions we have been experiencing during a lull in their attendance here.

As we have discussed, Dennis, this local church is ready, willing and has the authority to deal with at least those who are attending here or on our books. However, in especially this instance where the influence of the organization is world encompassing we feel it prudent and necessary to work in harmony with the larger church body. I know you feel as strongly as I about bringing resolve to this issue. More than two years this church has waited. The members are only artificially stirred from what has become one false hope after another by what seems to them to be empty promises to their earnest pleas. How much longer must we wait?

Thank you very much for your rekindled efforts.

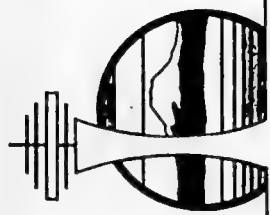
In Christ's love,

R. Scherence
Rod Scherence

ALIVE IN
CHRIST
CRUSADE

PASTOR ROD SCHERENCEL
10019 CAMPBELL LANE
EATONVILLE, WA 98328
(206) 832-8745

P.O. BOX 180, CANBY, OR 97013



OCT 15 1991

20015 Bothell Way S.E.
Bothell, Washington 98012
206-481-7171

Washington Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

October 10, 1991

Elder Alfred C. McClure
Elder Bob E. Jacobs
✓ Elder Robert Dale
General Conference of SDA
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring MD 20904-6600

Dear Brethren:

I am enclosing a copy of a letter that our conference secretary, Elder Dennis N. Carlson, sent to you, along with a copy of a letter that came from one of our pastors, dealing with the people from Hope, International.

It is very difficult for me to write this kind of letter, since I'm sure I do not understand everything that you men are dealing with. However, I would like to remind all of us that when this pastor makes this kind of appeal and speaks to the fact of waiting for two years for assistance, you men know that that is true.

Consistently, from the start, we have said that we did not want to act independently from General Conference or Division counsel. Yet, I guess at this particular point, we have reached a situation where at least we are expecting a specific response. Either we have to act without General Conference and Division help, or we need specific help soon.

I know that you men have many, many things to do, but the predictions that we made several years ago that this problem could not be ignored are proving very true, when you look at the brazen approach that seems to be coming from Hope International and articles like the recent one in Our Firm Foundation by Ralph Larson.

Let me reiterate. We are not asking you to make decisions for the local church; however, we are specifically asking for support in dealing with memberships and in counseling these people. I would like to state again, our reason for asking this is that we are not dealing with a local church problem primarily. We are dealing with an inter-division situation. From the past, we have found that these groups of people like to pick off a local pastor or even a local president. We cannot let them do that.

A. McClure, B. Jacobs,
B. Dale

-2-

October 10, 1991

I believe we can see Hope International becoming more brazen in the sense that it appears that Ron Spear's response to Bob Dale's invitation to meet was a veiled threat that he would meet only on "his conditions."

Sincerely, your friend in Christ,

Lenard

Lenard D. Jaacks
President
ah

Enclosures

cc: Dennis N. Carlson
Bruce Johnston

Yelm Seventh-day Adventist Church

P.O. Box 517 • Yelm, Washington • 98597 • 206-458-5144

August 26, 1991

Elder Dennis N. Carlson
Washington Conference of SDA's
20015 Bothell Everett Highway
Bothell, WA 98012-7198

Dear Dennis:

Recently, it was brought to my attention that the Yelm church did not have an actual written policy on the books concerning unacceptable independent ministries. I had been under the impression that there was some statement--at least regarding the transfer of membership of employees of unacceptable independent ministries. After looking through the minutes of board meetings and business meetings, I only found one statement that was taken up at a business meeting in 1987 which basically stated: no one who supports an unacceptable independent ministry could serve on the nominating committee or hold church office.

I found no other policy concerning unacceptable independent ministries. As far as I can tell, the working policy of the church board (i.e. deny transfer of membership to unacceptable independent ministries) was merely an oral tradition, and thus had not been documented or official action taken.

At a duly called church business meeting on August 14, 1991, we discussed a statement concerning unacceptable independent ministries. I originally prepared this statement to sum up the unwritten working policy of the church board. This statement was adopted as a policy of the church at this business meeting.

The Yelm Seventh-day Adventist Church will not transfer the membership (either in or out) of anyone who belongs to or follows an unacceptable independent ministry because the individual's membership would come into question. This policy is in harmony with the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual in which "adhering to or taking part in a divisive or disloyal movement or organization" is valid grounds for disciplinary action (see page 160).

I believe that this adopted policy gives clear direction in knowing how to deal with employees and supporters of independent ministries which do not support the church.

You have probably noticed that we do not attempt to define who the unacceptable independent ministries are. I do not believe

that the local church has the authority to classify any organization's status as unacceptable or disloyal--this must come from a higher church entity.

Dennis, as you know, the Yelm church has been struggling with Hope International over the years. As I've told you, many who are sympathetic with Hope and its employees are not attending our church at the present time. Some of these individuals are requesting membership transfers. Those who have been wavering between the church and Hope are wondering what's happening. Some of these people are taking a stand based upon emotion and not because of solid information. We need to have a clear message sent from the North American Division concerning Hope. Every week that passes causes untold hardship upon our church. For the sake of the our local church a decision must be made and soon!

Thanks for all of your help! I appreciate being able to ask counsel and to be assured that I will be heard.

Sincerely,



Rick A. Jordan

c. Elder Lenard Jaecks
Elder Dave Weigley

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Yelm Seventh-day Adventist Church

P.O. Box 517 • Yelm, Washington • 98597 • 206-458-5144

September 3, 1991

SEP 0 9 1991

Elder Robert S. Folkenberg
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

COPY

Dear Elder Folkenberg:

I'm sure that you receive many letters from people telling you that they know some member of your family--well, here goes again.... I am a friend of your son, Bob. We attended Seminary together and had many of the same classes. At the General Conference Session in Indianapolis, Bob and I (along with several other friends) were sitting together on that first Friday waiting for the nominating committee report to be presented to the floor. Everyone was wondering who the General Conference President would be. We were all elated and surprised--to say the least--when you were nominated and elected President. Bob was in a state of shock as we patted his back with excitement. It was clear to everyone that God was certainly moving over the Session!

Elder Folkenberg, I am writing this letter to pour my heart out to you concerning a particular issue and to get some counsel. I have been the pastor of the Yelm, Washington Church since January 1990. As a young pastor (not ordained), my ministry in Yelm has been filled with many wonderful experiences: witnessing growth in individuals, sharing the Good News of salvation with non-members, seeing people make decisions to follow Christ all the way in baptism, etc.. Personally, I would like to spend much of my time--along with all the members of my church--in outreach to the thousands in our community. Yet amid all the positive experiences and opportunities, there have been some frustrating times as well--frustrating because of some Independent Ministries in our area and the havoc they are having on my congregation and my ministry. The main (and most widely known) Independent Ministry in this area is Hope International.

Let me give you a little background.... Hope International is located approximately 18 miles from the Yelm Church in Eatonville, Washington. The Yelm Church is the closest church to Hope International, so over the years most of Hope's employees have, at one time or another, attended church services. Some of Hope's employees are members of the Yelm church. I know most of these people and have talked extensively with them concerning their ministry. I have, also, had to read large volumes of their

literature because I wanted to know where they stood on issues.

Basically, if I could summarize briefly, Hope International believes the church is currently in the state of apostasy. This apostasy was brought about by the church apparently flip-flopping on the nature of Christ in the book Questions on Doctrines. The result of this changed position has resulted in new theology teachings, which stray from the waymarks, and teach doctrine contrary to the historical Adventist tradition. In one of Hope's self-published books, Authority in God's Church, by Vernon Sparks, Ron Spear wrote the following in the foreword:

"The present apostasy has resulted in the usurping of God's authority by men in high places.

Let us not forget that when leaders, pastors, or laymen do not follow God's orders explicitly, clearly given by God's greatest gift to His remnant church, the Spirit of Prophecy, they have no authority."

The result of this view (the church is presently in an apostate condition) is a natural picking-and-choosing of demoninational policies. If it is perceived that a policy is trying to limit their personal freedom, it would be rejected as popery. One example among many would be the Guidelines for Acceptable Independent Ministries that was voted by the North American Division at Annual Council in 1988. No acceptance of tithing, outreach oriented rather than in-reach, and inter-divisional travel were among the 11 voted guidelines. Hope's position has been that they cannot abide by many of these guidelines; the church does not have the authority to tell a ministry what it can and cannot do. A leader at Hope told me personally that if they had to abide by the 11 Guidelines for Acceptable Independent Ministries, they would have to shut down because they couldn't function. It seems to me that this is a type of selective cooperation with the church organization.

The main organ for Hope International is "Our Firm Foundation." This magazine is published monthly and is sent to thousands of administrators, pastors, teachers, churches and members around the world. I heard recently that "Our Firm Foundation" has a larger circulation than the Adventist Review. This magazine's aim is to be an instrument through which the cry aloud--spare not--straight testimony may be given because this message isn't being preached in pulpits today. This publication often times criticizes the church and its leadership for not returning to, and following, the blue print that was given to the remnant by Mrs. White. Most of the articles are selected quotations from Ellen White, laced with personal interpretation and application. I know, from talking with several individuals from over seas, that when workers, who can't afford Spirit of Prophecy books, receive "Our Firm Foundation" they treasure the magazine because it contains Ellen White quotations. These workers don't realize

Yelm Seventh-day Adventist Church

P.O. Box 517 • Yelm, Washington • 98597 • 206-458-5144

March 17, 1992

Elder Robert L. Dale
North American Division
12601 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600
Fax: (301)680-6464

Dear Elder Dale:

Thank you for sending me a copy of the paper on Independent Ministries. I sincerely believe that this document will help clarify the issue, and will be beneficial in giving evidence about certain ministries that are in opposition to the Church.

I found the section dealing with Hope International (HI) to be very accurate, but as I mentioned to you on the telephone yesterday, I have several suggestions that might bring the paper up-to-date, since the notebook from which much of the information was gleaned, prepared in 1988 by Washington Conference, did not have current information in it.

1. Elder Doug Johnson pastored the Yelm Seventh-day Adventist Church during 1987-1989.

2. Rick Jordan has pastored the Yelm Seventh-day Adventist Church from January 1990 to the present.

3. In April 1990, after the letters of disapproval from the North American Division, North Pacific Union Conference, and Washington Conference were sent to HI, I called a meeting of all the employees of HI who at that time currently attended church at Yelm. Sixteen individuals attended that meeting that was held in one of the employee's home. I appealed to them as "their" pastor to please come into line and work in harmony with the Denomination and to stop dwelling on the negative and to uplift Christ.

4. The Yelm Church Board has been criticized sharply by HI

because they will not allow anyone connected with HI to transfer in or out of the Yelm Church. The Yelm Church has evaluated its position and believes that the church has grounds for refusing transfers. The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, 1990 edition, clearly spells out the procedure on granting letters of transfers. After the application is made, the church board recommends favorably or otherwise to the church concerning the application. Should a valid objection arise, the manual states:

"...if they are based on valid grounds, it is the duty of the church board to institute such investigation as may be needed. In such case the final action on granting the letter by the church is deferred until the matter has been satisfactorily settled."
p. 46.

Since objections were made on the church board concerning HI's ministry, the Yelm Church appealed to the Washington Conference for guidance, who in turn appealed to the North Pacific Union Conference, who appealed to the North American Division. The Yelm Church, is still in the investigative period while we seek guidance and will not transfer HI employees membership.

5. On August 14, 1991, the Yelm Church in business session re-examined the position it's held on unacceptable independent ministries and voted the following working policy:

The Yelm Seventh-day Adventist Church will not transfer the membership (either in or out) of anyone who belongs to or follows an unacceptable independent ministry because the individual's membership would come into question. This policy is in harmony with the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual in which "adhering to or taking part in a divisive or disloyal movement or organization" is valid grounds for disciplinary action (see page 160).

The Yelm Church will not transfer membership of any employee of HI because it is believed HI is an unacceptable independent ministry. The Yelm Church is waiting for guidance concerning this issue from the North American Division.

6. In one of HI's self-published books, Authority in God's Church, 1990, by Vernon Sparks, Ron Spear wrote the following in the foreword:

P. 02

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"The present apostasy has resulted in the usurping of God's authority by men in high places.

Let us not forget that when leaders, pastors, or laymen do not follow God's orders explicitly, clearly given by God's greatest gift to His remnant church, the Spirit of Prophecy, they have no authority."

The result of this view (the church is presently in an apostate condition) is a natural picking-and-choosing of denominational policies. If it is perceived that a policy is trying to limit their personal freedom, it would be rejected as popery. One example among many would be the Guidelines for Acceptable Independent Ministries that was voted by the North American Division at Annual Council in 1988. No acceptance of tithes, outreach oriented rather than in-reach, and inter-divisional travel were among the 11 voted guidelines. HI's position has been that they cannot abide by many of these guidelines; the church does not have the authority to tell a ministry what it can and cannot do. A leader at HI told me personally that if they had to abide by the 11 Guidelines for Acceptable Independent Ministries, they would have to shut down because they couldn't function. It seems to me that this is a type of selective cooperation with the church organization.

I felt that these points might help clarify certain parts of the paper. As I mentioned to you before, the Yelm Seventh-day Adventist Church has been devastated by HI. It is my hope that the world church will give careful attention to this frustrating problem and give guidance as to how the local church can deal with it.

This issue has caused untold hardship on my church, and I look forward to it being resolved. I would be willing to pay my own way to Washington to talk personally with the brethren if it would help. If there is anything I can do to help, please let me know.

Sincerely in Christ,


Rick A. Jordan
Pastor

Office of the
-Pastor

Yelm Seventh-day Adventist Church

P.O. Box 517 • Yelm, Washington • 98597 • 206-458-5144
FAX # (206) 486-2310

May 25, 1992

Dennis N. Carlson
Washington Conference of SDA's
20015 Bothell Everett Highway
Bothell, WA 98012-7198

Dear Dennis:

The Yelm Seventh-day Adventist Church currently has a membership of 165 with an average attendance of between 50 - 80. In January of 1990 there was an average attendance of around 120 each week. From what I understand, back in 1988, the average attendance was somewhere around 130. Why has there been a drop in attendance over the past five years? What has caused this type of decline?

As you are aware, the Yelm Church has been greatly affected in recent years by Independent Ministries and those of like thought. The result has been a sharply divided church. A church can only stay in the position of conflict for so long until greater conflict arises. Much of this contention has been over the independent ministry of Hope International.

Since Hope International's headquarters is located approximately 15 miles from the Yelm Church, many of this organization's employees have at one time or another attended services at Yelm. At the present time there are seven employees of Hope International that have membership at Yelm.

To give a little background on the struggle between Hope International and the Yelm Church, it is necessary to go back a number of years. For the past twenty years or so, Hope has been associated with several off-shoot and dissident groups. Hope was even a center for the Brimsmede movement back in the 1970's. The loyal members of the Yelm Church to denominational leadership tolerated these zealous people from Hope but were cautious and concerned about their views and actions toward the church organization.

In the mid 1980's when Ron Spear took over leadership at Hope, he brought an international scope to the mostly northwest organization. Under Ron's leadership, Hope became Hope International and developed the monthly paper "Our Firm Foundation" which is designed to give the "spare-not-cry-aloud-straight-testimony" message of historical Adventism. In the late

1980's Hope under went massive changes and its working staff grew. Many of Hope's employees were attending the Yelm Church regularly. In 1987, the balance of power in the Yelm Church (church board and key church positions) was held by either Hope employees or those who shared similar concerns against the church organization. Attendance and tithe dropped off during this year.

Because of the number of people who were attending the Yelm Church in the late 1980's had differences with the denomination, and an influx of employees of Hope International attending Yelm and requesting member transfers, the Yelm Church took a stand that no one from Hope International could transfer their membership in or out of Yelm until further investigation. This investigative period was begun to determine if Hope was a divisive and/or disloyal organization. It was also decided that employees of Hope International would not qualify to hold church office during this investigative period.

Most of the employees of Hope International who were members of the Yelm stopped attending services at Yelm because of the church's stand not to allow them to transfer membership and hold church office. Many church members who had theological sympathies with Hope shared their concern that a great injustice had been made toward "those wonderful, dedicated workers" from Hope and that there needed to be a complete reversal of the Yelm Church's position. The Yelm Church stayed by their original stand and in 1988 requested the Washington Conference to give some sort of guidance. As you know, Washington Conference appealed to the North Pacific Union for guidance and in return the North Pacific Union appealed to the North American Division.

For the past five years the Yelm Church has been waiting for some word from a higher church entity, but very little has been given. The repeated message has been given: We hope to have some word soon. No church can have unity when it's in a difficult investigative period for five long years! Five years??!!! Waiting this long for some sort of guidance has made even the most supportive members of the denomination wonder if anyone cares about our problem.

When I arrived in Yelm back in January 1990, it was thought that the most difficult part of this issue with Hope was over. The loyal members thought we needed to stick to our original decision not to allow Hope's employees to transfer or hold church offices, until some word came from Washington Conference. For my first seven or eight months at Yelm, the church had an average attendance of around 120. On a normal Sabbath there would be an average of between 15 and 30 Hope International employees in attendance. They were always treated with respect and kindness.

In April 1990, letters were sent to Hope International from the North American Division, North Pacific Union and Washington

Conference. These letters expressed their disapproval of the ministry of Hope International. Shortly after these letters arrived I arranged a meeting with about twenty employees of Hope International who were currently attending at Yelm. The purpose of this meeting was to share areas of concern that I, as the pastor of the church they most commonly attended, have toward Hope International. I shared with them my concern that they: not be overly critical of the church organization, accept tithes, needed to cooperate with the denomination instead of not listening to counsel. The response that I received was that they could not abide by the eleven guidelines for acceptable independent ministries passed by the North American Division because their ministry would be shut down.

After the General Conference session in Indianapolis in 1990, I began to share from the pulpit that God was leading the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as was evident by the General Conference Session. I also shared a pulpit series on how we need to listen to the wider counsel of the brethren and that independent ministries should be supportive ministries instead of having an independent spirit. Needless-to-say, the attendance at Yelm dropped. In October of 1990, I shared a sermon correlating the similarities of some independent ministries and the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram--attendance from Hope and those theologically sympathetic stopped attending.

Dennis, I would like to share with you several specific situations that have caused division to occur in the Yelm Church because of Hope International.

First, "Our Firm Foundation" is sent to almost every member of the Yelm Church. The theological slant of this magazine is toward perfection and critical of the church organization. Members read this magazine as it misuses and misquotes Ellen White. They read how the church is in apostasy and criticize the organization and leadership of the SDA Church. Some members believe and read "Our Firm Foundation" more than they do the "Adventist Review." As you can imagine, it may be a little difficult for a loyal member of the SDA Church to welcome wholeheartedly someone into church fellowship who has written such a negative piece about the church that you love.

Second, someone was writing down all the names of visitors to the Yelm Church from our guest book and sending them to Hope International so they could be sent "Our Firm Foundation." Several people complained to me personally that they had never received the magazine until after they had attended Yelm and signed the guest book.

Third, on several occasions an employee of Hope International befriended members and non-members of the Yelm Church, and openly criticized the local church, local conference leadership,

and told them that the Adventist Church was in apostasy. With this sort of thing happening, it is very difficult for evangelism because who wants to join a church that is wrong!

Fourth, a number of employees of Hope International have tried to seek out those who would study with them. This was done not only to members, but also non-members. I asked those people to please not seek bible study interests from among those who attend Yelm, but rather find their own study interests from the community. Their response was negative. They felt they had a message that they needed to present to both Adventists and non-Adventists, and to ask them to not seek interests from Yelm is a limiting of their own personal freedom.

Fifth, the employees of Hope International have a large amount of influence over a number of members of the Yelm Church. They regularly share their concerns about how their religious freedom is being taken away by the Yelm Church actions. As a result, some of those influenced members share their concerns regularly with the other members of the church.

Sixth, recently a large group of Hope International employees attended one particular Sabbath School class and would leave before the worship service. When a large group attend S.S. yet leave before the church service starts, it raises questions in peoples minds as to why. This has been quite divisive.

Seven, an unauthorized drawing of the Yelm Church appeared in the October 1991 issue of "Our Firm Foundation" in which a saddened Jesus appears looking over the Yelm Church.

There are other instances that could be mentioned, but for the sake of brevity will not be. The results of these and other issues have devastated the Yelm Church. The longer we wait for a decision, the more divided the Yelm Church will become. Please, Dennis, we need some guidance!!

Sincerely in Christ,

Rick A. Jordan
Rick A. Jordan
Pastor

APPENDIX XII

**STEPS TO LIFE MINISTRIES
ORDINATION**

Director: John J. Grosboll

June 3, 1992

Ron Spear
c/o Hope International
P.O. Box 940
Eatonville, WA 98328

Dear Ron,

May the abiding care of our heavenly Father and the grace of our Lord Jesus and the conviction of the Holy Spirit be with all of our spirits.

I am writing this letter in regard to the telephone conversations we have had with you, with members of your staff, Colin Standish and a number of other individuals the last few days concerning the plans for the ordination of John Osborne and Bob Trefz at the Steps to Life camp meeting. I want to begin my remarks by talking about "Pastor John", who lives in Florida. However, before I even begin those few remarks, I want to make a few other preliminary remarks of a personal nature.

When I was still in academy, before going to Walla Walla College, I was in the process of making a final decision, as to whether to go to study theology and prepare for the ministry or not. During the time I was growing up, my parents had served as missionaries for the Seventh-day Adventist church and had been involved in the medical work of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Wherever in the world we had been living, our family had been very closely involved in the work of the local Seventh-day Adventist church. Young people are not able to research everything out that they are taught, they absorb a very great deal by simply watching, listening, and what you might call "mental osmosis." And I had watched and listened and absorbed many concepts in my growing up years in the Seventh-day Adventist church. I come from a family which was, you might say, completely loyal to the Seventh-day Adventist church and our understanding of what the Seventh-day Adventist church was. I cannot even tell you where I first learned it or was taught it but I believed the Seventh-day Adventist church was the church structure, or what is often called "the organization."

I can remember driving past the Colorado conference office, in Denver, Colorado and looking at the building that contained the official conference association with legal documents. And you know all about those things. And it went through my mind as I would drive past that building that this was the church.

During the time I was in academy and deciding to study theology and become a minister I was clearly and plainly warned against it through sincere teachers. I was informed, that there was a great deal of politics in the Seventh-day Adventist ministry and that it would be better for me to go into some other kind of work where there would not be so much "politicizing."

Nobody in my family was a minister. I had absolutely no conception of what they were talking about. We had been taught ever since childhood concerning loyalty to God's church, which we understood was the organization. In spite of the counsel against going into the ministry because of the tremendous amount of politics in the church, I decided against that counsel and did it anyway. I received exposure to politicizing in the Seventh-day Adventist Church for the first time when I was a senior at Walla Walla College. This exposure was painful. When I realized what I was dealing with I really didn't want to have anything to do

Ron Spear
June 3, 1992
Page 2

with it. I figured out that I could go to Vietnam. I knew I would get shot at over there, but I thought it wouldn't be as bad to get shot at and maybe get killed as to endure what I could see ahead of me. I had things worked out to go to the University of Denver and follow a business career after Vietnam. But I kept praying about it and hoping that at some point in time, if I didn't get a call then I could take that as an indication that God would allow me to go into some other kind of work and not have to go into this business where there is so much politicizing and so much hypocrisy. In my heart, however, I knew that I had to be honest with God. If He was calling me into the ministry, as I had thought He was, I could not refuse a call if one came. And I had to let potential employers know that I was available. I would not be able to go into some other kind of work unless the Lord saw fit for me to not receive a call into ministerial work. If I did not receive a call, I had plans to enter another area of work.

But the time came when I did get a call. And, as I thought about it, I felt that I would have a guilty conscience if I didn't follow it. And so I went into the ministry. After I got into the ministry I was exposed to so much politicizing in the Seventh-day Adventist church that I used to pray and ask the Lord if it would be possible to please let me be fired so that I could go to Vietnam. And if I survived being shot at over there, I could come back and go into medical missionary work like my parents had been involved in and not be involved in all of this politics in the ministry.

I was in a meeting one time when a union conference president told us that we shouldn't do certain things, because, he said, "If you do this you will force us to lie." I thought to myself, "What do you mean, we will force you to lie?" That is totally contrary to the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. But when you have a political mind, that is the way you think. The conference president told us point blank that who they were looking for were "team-players"-- people that would do what they were told. You did not disagree with "church" authority on any point or you were fired. I could tell you many stories along that line, but you know enough of those stories already. I found that in actual practice the Seventh-day Adventist Church did not have a representative form of church government at all. That was only a name, but in reality it was a hierarchy.

At one point in time I became very desperate in my mind. I heard word that I was going to be transferred to a certain place and I was so wrought up and went to the Lord. I suppose I was impetuous and used poor judgment, but I just told the Lord something like this, "If they call me there I am not going. I will resign the day that I receive that call." But the call never came. I couldn't resign. I kept trying to figure out ways -- "was there any way that I could get fired so that I did not have to be in this political business and hypocrisy which was so utterly painful. But none of those things happened and instead, as time went on, I was getting along very well with my conference presidents. Eventually I became scared. And I began asking myself, "Have I been in this system so long that I am becoming a hypocrite? Am I becoming like the system? Is it affecting my mind? Am I not the way I used to be?" And yet, I couldn't leave it with a clear conscience. But the time came, when almost all of a sudden, the Lord took me out of it.

But back to my remarks about Pastor John, in Florida. I call him Pastor John because his first name is John. I call him pastor because, at one time, he called himself the associate pastor of the church which I was pastoring. The conference president objected to that and so, as I recall, we finally took that title, which he had given himself, off the church bulletin.

Pastor John was a vivacious, intense, enthusiastic, gregarious, and highly musical person. As I recall, he had been a pastor of another protestant denomination. He was a very engaging person. He could be talking in the car, or any place and just hold you spell-bound

with whatever subject he was talking to you about. He had a very volatile temperament, and controlling his temper was one area in life where I knew he would have a lot of praying to do if he was going to succeed. But he was one of the most personable and likable individuals that you would ever meet. He had a lovely wife, a well-behaved family, at least his children were well behaved whenever I was around them.

I got acquainted with pastor John when I first went to North Dakota. Like I say, he had been the pastor of another Protestant denomination, but he had forsaken his career, his job, everything in that church, to become a Seventh-day Adventist. He was convicted of the truths of the three angels' messages and the Sabbath. Since he had been a pastor in another denomination, he wanted to be a pastor or a preacher in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. He was made the singing evangelist for the evangelistic team for the North Dakota conference. Now, as is the case with some other individuals in this world, Pastor John was not really a manager of money. That was not his talent. In fact, he had a problem with getting into debt and not being able to pay his debts. He was a man of world vision, and of large plans. He was a visionary, but he needed the help of his wife (who was a very talented person) to make his visions come to pass. Both of them were excellent musicians. When you were in a group of a few ministers, as the saying goes, pastor John was really the life of the party. He was a most interesting individual.

However, because of the problems that he had with money he rubbed the conference president the wrong way. Our conference president had formerly been a treasurer. He was a man who knew how to manage money and he didn't like this business of getting into debt and not being able to pay your debts. So, the conference president was just not altogether pleased with pastor John, because of his money problems.

The time came when the evangelistic team in the North Dakota conference, which was a small conference, was dissolved. They had no more conference evangelists so, of course, they had no more singing evangelist. Well, that was pastor John's job, so now what was he to do for employment? He would like to have been a pastor, or to work as an assistant or associate pastor in a church. He was not making a request for anything large, but he wanted to work in the ministry. But the conference president told him, since he did not have a college degree, [as you know, there are some churches that do not require their pastors to have college degrees] he would need to go to a Seventh-day Adventist college and he would need to start at the beginning. In other words, he would need to take history, freshman composition, all the basic subjects, go through a four-year college course, and then go through a two-year seminary course. Then after he had gone through all of this, he could apply to be a minister or a pastor in a conference. The conference however, had no money to help pastor John with such a project.

Pastor John not only had a wife, but he had children to support. And so Pastor John decided he would go to a local community college to at least take the beginning courses such as freshman composition, history, and those sorts of things. The conference claimed later that he had done this against their counsel because they had counseled him to go to a Seventh-day Adventist college. However, as pastor John pointed out, a Seventh-day Adventist college costs a lot more than a community college and his beginning courses he could take there for a lot less money. That was an additional point of friction between pastor John and my conference president. The community college that he chose to attend was in Valley City, North Dakota, which was in my district. It was my first year in the ministry, having never interned under anyone, but being sent directly to the largest city in the state and having another church in Valley City, which was sixty miles away, I was delighted to have the help of this vivacious young man and his wife in that little church. The

little church in Valley City was in almost a desperate condition. Only five or six people attended on Sabbath morning and sometimes one or two or three visitors. Having pastor John's family come into the church almost doubled the attendance on Sabbath morning.

At camp meeting time, during camp pitch, pastor John rented an airplane and flew up to the town where we were having the camp meeting. The airport was only a mile or two or three from the camp meeting. When he flew in, I went and picked him up and brought him back to the camp. After he had visited different people there that day, I took him back out to his airplane and he said, "Come with me for a spin around the patch." So we went up and just flew around the field a time or two, chatted together and then he flew back home.

That evening the conference president wanted to see me. I was informed that I could hurt myself very severely by being associated with pastor John and what I had done was quite dangerous. I was given to understand that I should not do anything like that in the future because it could endanger my career in the Seventh-day Adventist ministry. The conference president didn't want anybody befriending pastor John in any way.

You see, pastor John had a falling out with the conference president some time before. I don't suppose that any of the people in the conference knew this, but it just so happened that at the time when the real falling out occurred over the telephone I was at pastor John's house. I heard his side of the conversation when he and the conference president were going at it in a very heated manner. They disagreed in a most heated and decided manner over the matter. The conference president was determined to have his opinion prevail in done. And so pastor John felt that he would lose face in the whole community if that was would do anything contrary to what the conference president had decided to do. So pastor John decided to call Tacoma Park. Neal C. Wilson was then President of the North American division and Robert Pierson was the General Conference President. Pastor John was going all the way to the top if necessary to solve his problem. But nobody at any level of the structure was willing to try to help Pastor John resolve the issue contrary to what the conference president had decided to do. Pastor John was completely baffled in his attempt to get relief from a situation that he felt was unbearable.

During all of this time he was attending college, taking class work so that he could be, eventually, a Seventh-day Adventist minister. He was active in the local church and visiting. Church attendance went up, and there was a wonderful spirit in the church. Everybody in the church loved him and it looked like there was potential for church growth. When one of the church members found out that, in this situation, pastor John had called, not just the conference, but all the way to the general conference and had not been able to get any relief, it was felt it would be appropriate, in this situation, to make this problem known to the entire constituency of the North Dakota conference. After all, the Seventh-day Adventist church is supposed to be a representative church and it is really the people who are supposed to have the decision-making power. The representatives of the people, get together in a constituency meeting [at that time it was every two years] and select officers. They decided to send out a mailing to the entire constituency of the North Dakota conference.

It was this mailing that made the conference president so upset and determined that no minister or any employee of the conference should befriend pastor John in any way because now his job was on the line. If people should believe the report in this letter it could have an adverse affect and he might not even be re-elected as the conference president. I know that this was what was on the conference president's mind because there

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was a departmental man there in the North Dakota conference at that time, whose name was Malcolm Gordon. During the camp pitch I just happened to overhear him and the conference president, as I recall, talking about this situation and what effect they thought this communication would have on the constituency meeting. Well, they were successful in convincing the constituency that everything was on the level and, as I recall, all the officers were returned to their offices at that constituency meeting. Whether Pastor John was in the right or the wrong is not the point--the point is that the way we treat each other in these situations always has consequences as we will now see.

Pastor John was thwarted and was not able to get any relief from the constituency or any level of the church. Moreover, he was not encouraged to even pursue further studies for the ministry, since he had violated counsel by going to a community college to get his basic courses. He understood that the conference had frowned on what he had done and maybe his chances were not going to be so good to get back into the Seventh-day Adventist ministry after all.

At a later time there was a meeting of the ministers [I think it was for all the ministers in the whole Northern Union] in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I did not drive a car to that meeting, but I believe I was riding with another minister in his car. A friend of mine, another Adventist minister, was at the meeting, but did not have a car. He reported the following incident to me years later and we were both very sorry over it. He told me that at this meeting pastor John was there on business at the same time and he was hard up since he had a family to support. He was trying to go to school and support his family on the side and prepare for the ministry. He was there and he went to talk to the ministers. Since he was going to be on his way home, one of the Seventh-day Adventist ministers could have given him a ride in his car and just gone right by his place and drop him off. (Valley City was right by the freeway.) But none of the ministers would really have anything to do with him. So, no doubt, he had to go and buy a bus ticket to get home. My friend who was also a Seventh-day Adventist minister, who didn't have a car there to offer him a ride told me how sorry he was. How terrible he felt at the way our ministers had treated this brother, who had also really been a Seventh-day Adventist minister, but was on the "outs" with the organization at that time.

Do you know, Ron, that even though this pastor John, was so talented, so vivacious, so personal, so volatile, and such a wonderful musician he was also a very sensitive person? Sometimes very talented people are also very sensitive.

In the aftermath of all things (of which I have related a few details), pastor John became discouraged. Almost everybody in the Adventist ministry had given him a cold shoulder. He felt like he had almost no friends in the whole world. The time came when secretly, without telling anybody, he left town. He didn't bother to try to finish even paying out his bills in town, he didn't tell anybody he was going. He just packed up his family and quickly left town. He not only left town, he not only wasn't an Adventist minister, he was so discouraged he wasn't even an Adventist at all. He went back to Florida. As I recall, the last I heard he was an insurance salesman down there, I suppose a very successful one.

I have thought a lot about pastor John over the years. And I have thought exceedingly a lot about him over the last few days. I know that the day is coming when I am going to see pastor John at the judgment bar of the Lord, if no other time. And the thing that keeps coming back to my mind -- Oh, I know, he had a lot of faults. He didn't get his bills paid. He didn't manage his money. He made lots of mistakes. But I've always wondered, "Is it partly my fault? Is it partly my fault because I didn't put my reputation, my job, and my career on the line to try to save him?" I feel terrible about pastor John. I think to myself,

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"Did I do everything that I could do?" As I look back at it now, years and years away from the actual experience and I think of what was said and what was done, when I think of his children and of his wife, all of whom could lose their souls because of the conduct of the Adventist ministry, how petty it all looks! How narrow minded it all seems now! Somebody could say, "Well, they might have lost their souls anyway." Yes, they might have. Judas lost his soul. But at least in the judgment it can't be said that Jesus didn't give him every opportunity. We cannot say to pastor John that we gave him every opportunity. As I look back at it, it doesn't seem at all like the spirit of Christ. Over and over again the thought has come to me, "Did I do everything I could to save pastor John?" I can't work for pastor John's salvation anymore. It's too late now. But more than once since that time, the thought of my heart has been, "Lord, by your grace, I'll never let that happen again." Everybody has feelings. Everybody has emotions. No human being has infinite strength. Did my deep loyalties to the organization bedevil my judgment so that I did not put *everything* on the line to try to save him? I don't know why I didn't see things more clearly then. All I know is that now it is too late. I have no idea where he is or if he is even alive. But I have decided that I don't ever want to make the mistake again of not doing everything -- not putting my life, my career, my job, everything I've got on the line to save a soul.

The way we deal with each other in crisis situations can result not just in the saving or loss of the souls of others, but even people who are leaders in God's work can lose their way. They can become discouraged because everybody gives them the cold shoulder and no one gives them any support. I know that many times you and Betty have felt lonely as you have tried to do what you believed God has wanted you to do. I have always sincerely hoped that any time I was around that maybe you could feel a little less lonely. There are also leaders of other ministries who have been fought and opposed and who have had to stand apparently alone, seemingly without a friend in the world. It is easy in situations like that for people to make mistakes (i.e. Edson White in the South) -- when they are badgered, beaten down, opposed, baffled and thwarted and are trying to figure how to make ends meet and how to keep their family life together and how to make a ministry go forward. It's very easy to make mistakes when you're all alone and most everybody is giving you the cold shoulder or outright opposing you.

My brother, Marshall, knew what it was like to stand alone and be opposed from apparently every direction. One time my brother called me on the telephone, when I was in Texas, and mentioned to me briefly what had happened to him. The rest of the short conversation went approximately as follows. I told him, "If they drive you out of town, you can come and live with me." "Well," he said, "thank you." He knew what it was like to be rejected -- to have your reputation, smeared, destroyed, broken -- to be betrayed by those who you considered to be your very best friends, to be condemned and to be forced out and to be notified that You are just fired from the system because you could not do what you were asked to do and still have a clear conscience. Steps to Life came into being because there is one question my brother always asked when there were forks in the road and decisions to be made. And the question that was asked constantly, over and over again, is: *Is it right? Is it right?* What is the right thing to do -not. What is the political thing to do. That is why Steps to Life exists. I could go on in great detail, giving examples of that principle.

A fundamental issue that was right at the foundation -- right at the bottom of the whole controversy involving Marshall at the Three Angels Church, in Wichita, was the concept of "who and what is the church." My brother studied that issue through on his knees with his Bible. He knew what the New Testament taught on who and what the church is and he

preached it. He believed the Bible meant what it said. And he was afraid to interpret Ellen White in a way that would make her contradict the Bible. Just yesterday I was looking over a list of different sermons that my brother was preaching in 1986 and 1987. He was talking repeatedly about who and what the church is and the New Testament concept of the church. People didn't realize that he was addressing the pivotal issue in the Seventh-day Adventist church in our time. And unless your bearings are straight on this issue, you will be confused, perplexed and mixed up on almost everything else.

Incidentally, Ron, this is one of main reasons I have enjoyed working with you so much, because I have seen over and over that you had a clearer spiritual perception of who and what the church is than most people even in special ministries. There are very few people, even in special ministries, who understand the Biblical, New Testament concept of the church. I am not saying that to criticize anyone. It is just a recognition of the facts.

I was working with Marshall, in 1988, when he was forced out of the Three Angels Church. We were told that you had to be a part of the structure in order to do evangelism. But we were not a part of the structure anymore, so obviously, according to their definitions, we couldn't do evangelism anymore. We had to ask ourselves that question and think through that controversy that had been foisted upon us. Since we are not now a part of the recognized Seventh-day Adventist church structure, do we have a right, or is it even possible to do evangelism? (We were told it was impossible to do evangelism) Is it impossible to do evangelism if you are not a part of the church structure? We had to struggle through that question with our Bible, Spirit of Prophecy and prayer. We decided that we had to be engaged in evangelism, because that was a divine command. We could not say that we were just going to do that if we were given permission.

Another question that we had to think through was, does Steps to Life even have a right to exist? When we did evangelism and we got people ready for the church, there was no local church that was associated with the conference that we could take them to, because the people in those churches were trying to fight us. So, we had our own group that we brought them to, but that group was not a recognized church by the conference. So, was it a church at all? Some people don't think it is a church. Steps to Life is based on the concept that we do have a church, whether it is recognized by the conference or not. It is still part of the body of Christ, because the body of Christ is never defined in the Bible in organizational terms. If it is wrong to have a church that is not recognized by a conference, as some people believe, then Steps to Life does not have a right to exist. We have had a local church here that was not recognized by the conference ever since we began.

All manner of accusations have been shot at us from every quarter. It has been claimed, for instance, because of some of the messages that I have given about the nature of the church, that we do not believe in church organization. That is a false accusation. In our church we do have church organization. We have elders and deacons, we have order and we do evangelism. We counsel together with other churches of historic Adventists. We do believe in church organization. We are not a new or a different church. We are Seventh-day Adventists. And we are a Seventh-day Adventist congregation and a Seventh-day Adventist local church.

We have also been accused of being separationists. That is a false accusation also, but I will not deal with that in this letter. All manner of attacks have been published and preached against our concept of the church (which we do not consider to be our own, but only the concept of the church according to the New Testament). Many Seventh-day Adventists today believe that there are two true churches. Now they don't acknowledge that fact, but they actually believe it. They say that there is a visible church and an invisible

church. Then they take some Spirit of Prophecy statements and apply that to what they call the visible church and they take other statements and apply that to the invisible church. Such a concept, thinking or rationale has to be false according to the Bible. The Bible is very clear that there is only one church (see Ephesians the fourth chapter). Any theory or theology which describes two *true* churches is false and unbiblical. To interpret the Spirit of Prophecy in that way is to make Ellen White contradict the Bible; it is to seriously misunderstand the nature of who and what the church is. The church is only one thing. It is one body, the body of Christ, as the apostle Paul describes it in first Corinthians twelve and Ephesians one and Colossians one. He describes it as the body of Christ, the bride of Christ. In Ephesians the fifth chapter he likens it to the wife where he says we are "bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh." The Apostle Paul makes a great deal of likening the sexual relationship of marriage to the relationship of Christ to the church. He does this not only in Ephesians 5:30-32, but he also does it in 1 Corinthians 6:15-17 where he says that "he that is joined to a harlot is one body with her, but he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." If you are not joined to the harlot, you are not one body, and if you are not joined to the Lord you are not one spirit. If you are not flesh of His flesh, and bone of his bone, if you are not joined to the Lord, if you are not one spirit with Him, then He says in Romans 8:9 that you are none of His. So the concept of the church as the body of Christ is a concept that many Christians, many Seventh-day Adventists, have not thought through.

In the Bible and in the Spirit of Prophecy, many times something is spoken of and just a part of it is referred to. For instance, Jesus said, "If your brother offends you or he sins against you, you go and speak to him alone and if he doesn't listen to you, then take with you one or two more that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he doesn't hear them, tell it unto the church." Now, what church was Jesus talking about? The church is only one thing. But Jesus was not talking there about the church universal. He was talking about what the Reformers called the church particular -- that is the local church, which is *part* of the church, but not the whole church. And in the same way many times in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy reference is made to the church and the writer is not referring to the whole church, but to part of the church. Some people take some of these statements and make a great deal out of them and make them teach something that causes the writer to contradict the most basic teaching of the New Testament about the church.

Who was the church in Jesus day? There are people who believe that, "Jesus tried to conciliate the church" as much as he could. Now that is a preposterous statement if you understand who and what the church is. However, many sincere Christians are so far from understanding what the true church is that they will make a statement like that. Jesus is the church. He was the church then and He is the church today. The church is the body of Christ, so Christ *is* the church. Then how could one say that He conciliated the church as much as He could? What is a person even dreaming about? Did He conciliate Himself? You see, our people today don't understand who and what the church is or they would never even be thinking things like that much less making statements in public that are so ludicrous, if they understood who and what the church is.

Jesus is the church. He was the church. The church is His body. The church in Jesus' day were those who followed Jesus -- His disciples. Caiaphas was not the head of the church in Jesus day. Jesus never laid down His headship of the church. He did not lay His divinity aside. He did not leave the church to somebody else. It was still His body. He was still the head of the church all the time He was here. And those that recognized who and what the

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church was followed the head of the church and that's who the church was. They were the body of Christ.

This was a main issue in the time of John the Baptist. He attacked the Jews' concept of who and what the church is -- who and what the people of God are. Of course, the church are God's people, not only in this world, but in all the other worlds. The Jewish people thought that because they were the lineal seed, the fleshly seed, the bloodline of Abraham that they were part of the true church. And that's the way they interpreted Genesis 17. But John the Baptist told them, as you can read in Matthew 3 or as you can read *Desire of Ages*, 107 that if their character and life were not in harmony with God's law then they were not His people. In other words they were not part of the church. That was the critical issue in John the Baptist's day -- who and what is the church? And he goes into it in great detail in Matthew the third chapter. He told the leaders that what they *thought* was the church was not the church. He told them that they were not even members of the church and they didn't like it. Ellen White says, of course, that in the time of the end that God's servants will have to bear a more pointed testimony than that of John the Baptist (1T 321). At Steps to Life we have the same concept of who the church is as John the Baptist.

Jesus not only upheld the work of John the Baptist, but he reinforced his teaching even more powerfully. He told the Jews in John the eighth chapter very plainly that they were not Abraham's children because they were not like him in character. You can read a description of that in *Desire of Ages*, 466 and 467. Jesus went on to tell them that they were the sons of the devil, because the devil was a liar from the beginning and a murderer and of course they were right then plotting His murder and telling untruths. Therefore, that proved that they were the spiritual children of the devil. They had characters like the devil, because they were sinning like the devil. As the apostle John says in 1 John 3:8, "He that sins is of the devil." So Jesus plainly taught that the person that sins, who lies, who plots murder, who breaks the law, who teaches people to break God's law, is not part of the church. They can claim whatever they want to. They are actually children of the devil. They are not the children of Abraham. They are not really members of the church. We believe this same concept.

Ellen White says the devil has a large church -- the synagogue of Satan. It is composed of those people that break God's law and teach other people to break God's law (TM 16). They can have any name, including the name Seventh-day Adventist, but if they are breaking God's law or teaching people to break God's law they are part of the synagogue of Satan. That is the Spirit of Prophecy speaking. That is not my idea or thought. That is what the Spirit of Prophecy and what the Bible says in 1 John three and Revelation two and three.

Marshall had this all worked out, I think, before he ever came to Wichita. I worked it out later praying and studying the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, trying to find out about who and what the church was. One of the greatest chapters in the Bible about who and what the church is, which opened the whole subject up to my mind (I was amazed when I saw it, that I hadn't seen it before) was Revelation twelve. I will not take time now to go through a systematic study of Revelation twelve. It is one of the greatest chapters, one of the greatest prophecies, in the entire Bible in my opinion. It specifies and defines who and what the church is.

There was a time when the Roman church captured the clergy, the organization, the buildings, the money -- apparently everything. From a human point of view (of those who believed that the organization was the church) it appeared that apostasy had gained complete control. But if a person understood Revelation twelve, they understood that the

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structure wasn't the church. The structure (those in the structure) were the ones persecuting the woman, spewing out a flood of water, to cause her to be devoured by the flood. They really were not the church.

There were times during the dark ages when the church apparently did not have as much organization as might be desired because the church had to go underground. But the amount of organization that the church has is not the determining factor or the defining factor of the church. In *Great Controversy*, 51 it says, "Romanists have persisted in bringing against Protestants the charge of heresy and willful separation from the true church. But these accusations apply rather to themselves. They are the ones who laid down the banner of Christ and departed from 'the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.' Jude 3." When you lay down the banner of Christ, when you depart from the faith once delivered to the saints you have departed from the church, according to that statement. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth. If you leave the truth, you have left the church. There is more that could be said on the subject of the church and the whole subject of the professed church, but obviously I am not here to write you a book -- merely to write a letter.

Why should I in this letter go into this much detail about the New Testament church--the nature of the church? Because that is the most fundamental issue on which we are dealing. If we are wrong on that issue, (now, we may be wrong on some minor points), if we are substantially wrong on that issue, Steps to Life does not really have a right to exist, because we are a local church. We are not just a ministry. And we have been a church ever since we started. There is a great controversy among God's people today about who and what the church is. Many still believe what I used to believe -- that the church is the organization. If the church is the organization, then to stay in the church you have to stay in the organization. Or, some people believe that you must remain attending a conference church. What does one do then if false doctrine is taught, and one's children are becoming deceived? What do you do if people are becoming hypnotized and principles of mind control are being used? What do you do when your family becomes deceived and deluded and they lose their souls? All this can result because a person has a wrong concept of who the church is. If they believe the church is "the organization," as people call it, then, of course, it would be wrong to start a home-church. You must stay and allow your children to be lost or whatever happens to you in order to "be in the church." People who have believed that the church is the organization, when they first hear the New Testament teaching or understand the New Testament concept about the church, they think, "Well, that disagrees with what Ellen White says," because they have taken Ellen White statements and used their own private definitions of what the church is and then placed them upon those statements. Then they have read things into them that they do not actually say. This issue is at the bottom of a lot of confusion in independent ministries today.

We have to remember that the Lord has told us that before we accept any doctrine or precept we should demand a plain, "thus saith the Lord" in its support. A plain thus saith the Lord in support of many of the theories going around about the church today simply doesn't exist. People are reading things into statements that they do not actually say.

If our views about the church are wrong, then we do not have a right to exist; we do not have a right to baptize; we do not have a right to ordain. We should just fold up our tents and go home. The two main principles out of which Steps to Life developed was the concept of simply asking the question at every turn in the road, "Is it right?" and secondly, "What is the Church?"

At this point I have to say something that I wish I did not have to say. I will illustrate it first of all by saying this: There are a lot of people in the world who think that Sunday

is the right day to go to church. Thousands of people could be amassed to give you and me counsel to go to church on Sunday. I wouldn't listen to that counsel whether it were 5 or 5,000,000 giving me counsel to go to church on Sunday, because I know from the Word of God what it teaches. And they either don't understand or don't want to understand. Therefore, they are not qualified to give me counsel on that subject. The same is true in regard to the church. I love the ministry at Hope International and I love the ministry at Hartland. But I have been aware for a long time that there are many people both at Hartland and at Hope International that do not understand the New Testament concept of the church. I love a person that does not understand the New Testament concept of the church. I can be friends with that person. I can work with that person. But that person is not qualified to give me counsel on ordination, baptism, or any of those matters because they do not understand yet who and what the church is according to the New Testament. Until I am convinced that they understand this thoroughly, it would just be illogical, irrational, unethical and inappropriate for me to look to that person or for me to accept counsel from that person about the church, just as much as it would be for me to accept counsel from a person about which day to keep when they didn't understand that the seventh day is the Sabbath. If they don't understand that, they are just not qualified to give me counsel on that subject, although I could work with them and I might receive counsel from them on many other things.

If our views of the church are correct, then we have a right and a divine obligation and command to baptize. Not only that, we have a divine command that the ministry is to live of the gospel. Therefore, we have not only divine permission, but a commandment to receive tithes. That is a subject that I will not get into, but that is all involved in your concept of the church. Thirdly, we have a divine command to ordain men to the gospel ministry. That is not optional. It is a responsibility, and an obligation that God has laid upon His church. I would like to look for a few minutes with you at the experience of Paul and Barnabas.

As you study in Acts thirteen and fourteen and read in *Acts of the Apostles* or in *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, it is very evident that God is the one who selects people to be His representatives, or His ministers. No human being has a right or authority to do such a thing. God, Himself, is the one who selects His ministers. In *Acts of the Apostles*, at the bottom of page 161, it says, "Both Paul and Barnabas had already received their commission from God Himself, and the ceremony of the laying on of hands added no new grace or virtual qualification. It was an acknowledged form of designation to an appointed office and a recognition of one's authority in that office." So they had already received the commission from God Himself and the ceremony of the laying on of hands did not add any new grace.

But a second point that is obvious in studying the experience of Paul and Barnabas is that after God has selected a person or persons to be a minister(s) of His, He moves upon those who are already ministers to recognize this selection. He moves upon His church to recognize the selection that He has made. And the church and other ministers in the church recognize the person that God has chosen by the fruits of His ministry.

It is evident also, by studying the story, that Paul and Barnabas were ordained to the gospel ministry by the church at Antioch. This was a local church. The church at Antioch cannot *rightly* be called separatist from the organized church in Jerusalem because they ordained Paul and Barnabas. It could not be *truthfully* said to the Antioch church, "You are starting a new breed of separatism." You cannot *honestly* say that they were moving toward a separate organization when they ordained Paul and Barnabas. They were not separatists or starting a separate church organization. They were merely fulfilling the

divine command to ordain those that God had selected and adding them to the duly appointed agencies in God's organized church.

We see in this story that Paul and Barnabas had received their call and ordination from God Himself. But those on earth in Antioch, who were part of the body of Christ, recognized the call and appointment of God. They went on record publicly as believing that God had called them. They had direct evidence from the fruit of their ministry that God had called them. The local church solemnly dedicated Paul and Barnabas to the work of the gospel ministry and by this act of the laying on of hands they added the authorization of the church of God on earth to the commission Paul and Barnabas had received from God Himself. From this story I understand that ordination is no small, insignificant or trifling matter. But rather by this, Paul and Barnabas were authorized, not only to teach the truth, but to perform the right of baptism and to organize churches, being invested with full ecclesiastical authority. Ellen White says in *Acts of the Apostles*, 161, "The Apostles who had been appointed to lead out in this work would be exposed to suspicion, prejudice and jealousy. Their teaching concerning 'the middle wall of partition' (Ephesians 2:14) that had so long separated the Jewish and the Gentile world would naturally subject them to the charge of heresy, and their authority as ministers of the gospel would be questioned by many zealous, believing Jews. God foresaw the difficulties that His servants would be called to meet, and, in order that their work should be above challenge, He instructed the church by revelation to set them apart publicly to the work of the ministry. Their ordination was a public recognition of their divine appointment to bear to the Gentiles the glad tidings of the gospel."

On page 162 she writes that, "When the ministers of the church of believers in Antioch laid their hands upon Paul and Barnabas, they, by that action, asked God to bestow His blessing upon the chosen apostles in their devotion to the specific work to which they had been appointed."

She further says on page 163 that, "The Holy Spirit, again bearing witness concerning Paul as a chosen vessel to bear the gospel to the Gentiles, laid upon the church the work of ordaining him and his fellow laborer." So the Holy Spirit laid upon the church this responsibility. Now suppose that they had said, "Well, the timing is not right, because all of the Jews in the church will not understand, and therefore souls will be lost!" Someone might say, "Well, they had direct divine revelation." But Ron, we have abundant evidence that the Lord has called these men to the ministry. The Lord has clearly indicated His call of these men to the gospel ministry. The evidence is abundant and unequivocal to any candid mind who is willing to take an unprejudiced look at the fruit of the ministry of these two men. When the Holy Spirit directed the church in Antioch to ordain Paul and Barnabas, somebody could have said, "I wish you could have spent more time studying this first." They could have said, "Paul has a choleric temperament and what if there's a falling out between Paul and Barnabas later? I can't even imagine the consequences of all this." They could have said, "The Jerusalem headquarters church is going to blow apart. You are hastening, and precipitating an unnecessary crisis and bringing unnecessary strife and division into the church. After all James and the other apostles don't agree with Paul on some major theological issues. They are salvational issues and there are a multitude of people in the Christian church who are in the balance on these issues. We could lose the heavenly destiny of many a soul. We are not ready for it yet."

Ellen White made it very plain in *Acts of the Apostles* on page 199 and 200 that Paul often had to stand alone against the rest of the apostles. And so they could have said, "We are not ready for it yet. It's not time yet. The Jews are just waiting for us to make this

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move. And it hasn't been approved by the twelve apostles, let alone by the Sanhedrin. This will provide them just the ammunition they need to try to destroy us all." Some could also have *truthfully* said, "You are building a big gap between us here in Antioch and the headquarters church at Jerusalem. Because of the great danger and jeopardy between us here in Antioch and the headquarters church at Jerusalem, we cannot participate. We cannot push ourselves out of the church God has established without acting with direction from Jerusalem. If we do this many souls will feel it is wrong and we will put an argument into their hands that will cause many to be lost over this sensitive, emotional, divisive issue over the law and proper church organization because we acted without the auspices of the church at Jerusalem." It could also have been brought up that Paul was a very aggressive and controversial person to be involved with. Not only was he a former persecutor, but he got into a religious controversy in almost every Jewish synagogue he entered. It could have been said, "He is probably capable by his aggressive speech to stir up a riot. He will be hated by the Jews and he will not be appreciated or understood by the headquarters church and even the twelve apostles will oppose him. This is certainly a most dangerous man to ordain. We are going to bring ourselves into great perplexity and conflict and precipitate a crisis and bring persecution upon ourselves if we follow this course."

A study of the events following Paul's ordination shows that every one of these potential fears of the fainthearted were fully realized. He was opposed by the rest of the apostles. In fact, many years later, because of the faults, really, of the some of the apostles, especially the apostle James, and the leaders of the church at Jerusalem, Paul's ministry was cut short and he ended up in prison. Of course, when he ended up in prison many people could have said, "Yes, they really did make a mistake at Antioch when they ordained Paul." Ellen White writes about the way Paul was considered at that time in the book *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, page 226. "When Peter had been made a prisoner and condemned to death, the brethren had offered earnest prayer to God day and night for his deliverance. But no such interest was manifested in behalf of him who was looked upon as an apostate from Moses, a teacher of dangerous doctrines. It was not to the elders whose counsel had brought him into this dangerous position, but to the watchful sympathy of a relative, that Paul owed his escape from a violent death." So Paul was considered an apostate from Moses and a teacher of dangerous doctrines. The people that considered him an apostate were some of the leading brethren in the Jerusalem church and apparently as you read the context of this chapter, even some of the apostles. Concerning this story Ellen White says that, "It is the same spirit that the people of God in this age have yet to meet. In the great crisis, through which they are soon to pass, they will become better acquainted with the experience of Paul. Among the professed followers of Christ, there is the same pride, formalism, vainglory, selfishness, and oppression, that existed in the Jewish nation. Before the warfare shall be ended and the victory won, we as a people are to experience trials similar to those of Paul. We shall encounter the same hardness of heart, the same cruel determination, the same unyielding hatred."

"Men professing to be representatives of Christ will take a course similar to that taken by priests and rulers in their treatment of Paul. God would have His people prepared for the soon-coming crisis. Prepared or unprepared, we must all meet it. . . ."

"In that coming emergency, rulers and magistrates will not interpose in behalf of God's people. There will be a corrupt harmony with all who have not been obedient to the law of God. In that day, all time-servers, all who have not the genuine work of grace in the heart, will be found wanting. It will require the firmest trust, the most heroic purpose, to hold fast the faith once delivered to the saints."— *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, 251, 252.

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Many Seventh-day Adventists have never thought through the reality of the situation throughout Paul's life. The Jews occupied the position of being God's professed people during the whole of Paul's life. You can read words to that effect from *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, page 224. The Christian church was looked upon as a little splinter group -- a heretical, fanatical, off-shoot, little Jewish sect. The majority of this little sect in Jerusalem still believed in keeping the entire law as a matter of salvation. They would consider anyone who taught the doctrines Paul taught as suspect and a heretic -- part of a lunatic-fringe of the little, off-shoot Jewish sect. Well, it could have been said, "With all the trouble and persecution we already have endured from the Jews by ordaining Paul you are putting fodder into the cannon of our opponents to destroy us all. The Jewish Christians will be influenced against us by this move, which has not been approved by the headquarters church. You're timing is way off."

Although the Antioch church was capable of making a mistake, by not recognizing the voice of the Holy Spirit there was One who could not make a mistake in timing or anything else. When the Founder of Christianity ordained the twelve apostles to the gospel ministry He made no mistake. There were three leading apostles. All three, Peter, James and John would have been disqualified from ordination from the rules that some would like to enact today. All three had a volatile temper and were well capable of exploding without due cause. Years after their ordination to the gospel ministry one of them was guilty of swearing and attempted murder by decapitation. And the other two were guilty of solicitation to murder an entire city of Samaritans. When Ellen White describes the character of John at the time of his ordination she uses such descriptions as "combative," "evil-temper," "revenge," "spirit of criticism," and "violent spirit." (See *Desire of Ages* chapter, "He ordained Twelve.") Some penetrating minds of nearly sanctified saints could easily have questioned whether the Lord should not have waited to ordain them until a time when they had reached a higher level of sanctification -- when they would not be such a constant embarrassment to the Lord of glory. But the Lord did not wait to ordain them, until all the rough points in their characters had been polished out on the grinding wheel of trial, grief and affliction.

I would now like to review a little history to some of the statements that have been made and questions that have been asked regarding John Osborne. First of all, you have stated to me something to the effect that, "Well, you haven't known John for very long. And I've known him for a long time." The implication is, of course, therefore that I should be coming to you for counsel. I want to spend a considerable amount of time on this situation about counsel.

It is true that I have not spent as much time with John as you have. I believe the first time that I saw John was in 1954, but neither one of us were discussing things of a theological nature at that time. I am not a total stranger, as you might think, to John Osborne however. I know his mother, his older brother, and both of his sisters. I was not personally acquainted with his father, although I had seen him on a number of occasions. I have been in their home, that is his parental home, when he lived in Hendersonville, Tennessee. So I have more than just a cursory, passing knowledge of his family having known both of his sisters and his brother on a first name basis. And I know for a fact that he has a godly mother.

After Steps to Life was operating and Marshall and I were working together in 1988, we both were doing quite a bit of traveling. As we traveled, from time to time we would hear reports of various things about John Osborne. There was a time when he was trying to become reconciled to the conference. It did not work. Of course, it was impossible for him to be reconciled to the conference and work with any of us, so for a period of time

while we were not opposing him in any way, we were letting him do his work and we were engaged in our ministry. We knew he was trying to work with the conference and we knew from our experience that we could not. The time came, however, when John Osborne was not able to work with the conference anymore. At that point re-evaluations became necessary of when or how or what we might be able to do in working together. Since he had been independent, then had tried to work with the conference, and now was independent again, Marshall's opinion was, "Well, let's just wait a little while and see how things sort out. Then we will know a little more after some time has gone by as to what course we should pursue."

My sister and Marshall had a long discussion at the camp meeting in Kennewick, Washington in 1990, on the whole situation and the developments in regard to John Osborne's ministry and in what way we should relate to it. I wasn't in that discussion, but my sister, who is working with me now told me, "Marshall said, that, 'Well, we're just going to have to wait for a little while to see how things are going to develop. But by next year we're going to have to do something.'" In the early part of 1991, we discussed the situation again. I had not had any contact really with John Osborne since he had been in the ministry. As we talked about it we decided that we were going to need to go there and get acquainted with the ministry. Then we would just proceed on the basis of the evidence. I do not remember now what our point of contact with Prophecy Countdown was, but we did have communication with Prophecy Countdown and arrangements were made for myself, that I should go down to the Rolling Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church and have meetings over a weekend. That was in the Spring of 1991. The time that it was scheduled for was the first weekend in August. That turned out to be the very next weekend after Marshall and Lillian's funeral. Because of the extenuating circumstances, John Osborne called me and said that he was going to be in town that weekend and he volunteered to take the services for me. I thought that was very gracious of him and said approximately the following, "Thank you very much. I would like to take a rain check, but I'll be glad to come down another time." So, I didn't go to the Rolling Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church.

I was not the only one scheduled to go to preach and visit at the Rolling Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church and visit John Osborne's ministry. Marshall was scheduled to go there for the camp meeting in the fall. After Marshall's death, contrary to reports that might have been circulated, we did not change our stance, our approach, our philosophy, or anything as a result of Marshall's death.

During the latter part of 1991, I was trying to fulfill all of Marshall's speaking appointments, that had been made prior to his death. Since one of his speaking appointments was at the Prophecy Countdown camp meeting we had called them and told them that I would be available to speak. However, it was reported to Prophecy Countdown that I would not be attending their camp meeting. It was *apparently* an accident that Teresa Kendall was in that area having some meetings and talked to Bob and Cindy Welder from Prophecy Countdown. Teresa let them know that I was open to going to their camp meeting and that rumors were rumors to us, until proven otherwise. When John Osborne found this out, Prophecy Countdown immediately called me on the phone and invited me to come to their camp meeting. It was just a few days away, but I said I would come. Because the dates had been changed from what they originally had been I already had other appointments and could not be there on the weekend, but I did go during the week.

It was during this same period of time, during the late summer and fall after Marshall's death, when you and I went on a walk that you listed for me a whole series of very serious accusations against John Osborne and you gave me a list of names of people who could give

me more information. I was so busy during that time, I really didn't have time to even check it out or do anything. But you recall, at our board meeting last January, although you did not speak to me about it beforehand and it was not on the agenda, in the early part of the afternoon, you said you had something to say. And a large part of the afternoon was taken up in bringing charges against John Osborne to our entire board of directors. At that time I stated to you that I had a lot of questions on the comments and statements that had been made. I decided that we were going to be forced, at this point, to do something.

Because the charges now were not now just in private, but to our entire board of directors at an officially called meeting, they either stand as approved or endorsed or they have to be rescinded or repudiated. So now we are not dealing anymore with simply one person talking to another person about a problem on a walk. We are dealing with an officially called board meeting of Steps to Life, which is a ministry which I believe God has called and ordained to do a special work in these last days. And we are dealing with another ministry or the leader of another ministry. This forced us then to take the time to start getting involved in an investigation.

I must say that this has not been something that has been pleasant or enjoyable for me. Because of the various circumstances surrounding this situation I have felt compelled to go directly to the sources to ask direct questions concerning various things and information. And frankly, I have asked John Osborne more sensitive questions and embarrassing questions than I have ever asked of any other human being in my whole life. I hope to the Lord that I never have to do something like this again. It was not my desire to ever do it in the first place, but because of the circumstances developing as I have just described, I felt that I was forced to investigate.

I must now state that as our investigation developed, we could not find objective evidence to substantiate a single charge or accusation that you made. I must repeat, not a single charge or accusation that you made can be substantiated by the evidence. I do not know of one detail that involves John Osborne in any culpability. That does not mean that no mistakes have been made, but when a person has repented, confessed and forsaken sin, we cannot hold them guilty. As far as we have been able to discover so far, every single one of the charges refers to something that was made right long ago, has been totally false or so terribly distorted that the entire tenor of the accusation or report gives a misleading impression.

I am now in the position where I must go to the next Steps to Life Board meeting and request that all the charges against John Osborne be repudiated. We cannot expect the blessing of God if we allow false charges against a fellow brother to be sustained without evidence and allow his reputation and perceived character to be destroyed unjustly.

I must also say that I have found John Osborne to be one of the most open persons that I have ever dealt with. After the terrible disillusionment, grief and shock that I had as a young man, when I discovered how the "system" worked in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the terrible hypocrisy involved in the system, dealing with John Osborne is like dealing with a breath of fresh air. When I asked him questions concerning these various charges involving some mistake or sin in the past he never covered anything up. He told me exactly what was said or done, what mistake was made or not made, the entire circumstances and if he said or did something that was wrong it was confessed, if need be, publicly.

Now Ron, after a person has confessed that they have made a mistake and they have repented of it and they have asked the Lord to help them not do that anymore, and it has been years in the past, and the Lord has given them victory on that point, is it following in

the footsteps of Jesus, is it "walking as He walked" (1 John 2:6) to keep bringing it up? And yet, Ron, this is what you keep doing. You keep bringing up something that is long in the past, that is repented of and confessed and forsaken years ago. I wouldn't like for anybody to do that to me. That is not doing to somebody else the way we would like them to do to us. If you operate on that type of ruling, not a single one of the disciples would have been present at Pentecost or have been allowed to be a minister in the Christian church. Every single one of them made very serious mistakes.

I can remember instances when high level administrators in our system would not apologize when they had made a mistake. Pride is what keeps us from apologizing. Pride is what keeps us from accepting rebuke and changing. I found that John Osborne was a person who has enough back-bone, who when he has made a mistake, to accept a public rebuke and confess publicly. Now that is one of the marks of a great Christian, in my opinion. When I was down at John Osborne's camp meeting just last week, when we did not see everything eye to eye concerning a certain matter, we prayed and talked it over. The Lord gave us one of the most blessed experiences of unity and working together that I have ever seen.

John Osborne is an intense individual. He is the kind of a person that whatever he does, he does with his whole being — with all of his emotions, with all his mind, with all of his heart, with all his zeal. That is not sinful. Jesus' disciples were that way. In fact, the leaders of the Christian church that Jesus founded to establish were all that way. The leading disciples, Peter, James and John, were all that type of temperament. So there's nothing wrong with that. God has used people like that many times in the past. It appears that King David was also a very similar type of person. We have been able to talk differences with enthusiasm, and maybe some people would call it vehemence, but there was no loss of temper or anger by anyone. And as I have already stated, when we have needed to discuss whatever it was (although he is a very intense person), I have found him to be one of the most open, candid people that I have ever dealt with, one who does not try to cover up anything.

After the descriptions I gave to you in the beginning of this letter, the type of situations that I dealt with in the system or the structure of the Seventh-day Adventist church as a young minister, dealing with somebody that is this candid and open in response to the most sensitive questions that it is possible to ask has been like walking into sunlight.

I now need to make mention of the videos produced concerning "Twisted Tales Untangled." You have stated that John has broadsided you or Hope International in these videos. I watched the videos and I didn't get the impression that John was attempting to broadside any ministry in the videos. The reason that those videos were produced was that lying charges against John Osborne in particular, and against Prophecy Countdown, in general were being circulated all over the world. You are well aware of materials that have been prepared and circulated all over the world in an attempt to destroy John Osborne and Prophecy Countdown Ministry. If an attempt like this was made, with slanderous, libelous materials, against Hope International or Steps to Life, you or I would feel duty bound to make a response without allowing our ministry to simply be destroyed without saying anything. If we really believe that God has appointed us to do the work that we are doing, we would not allow it to be destroyed without at least making an effort to make a protest and to explain and clear the air in the situation. This is what the board at Prophecy Countdown decided in regard to the scurrilous material that has been going all over the country.

Prophecy Countdown has received numerous telephone calls from various places in the world from people that have talked to you. They want to find out the situation about the various accusations you've made against John to them, so they've called down there to find out the evidence. The problem that is widely developing is that anybody who takes the trouble to really candidly investigate these accusations and these charges finds out that they are not well founded.

When I stated to you the other day on the telephone that in the long run this is going to hurt you and Hope International, you interpreted that as meaning that, "Oh yes, John Osborne is going to destroy you by the videos." But that was not what I was intending to convey at all. That is not the situation at all. It is not John Osborne that is destroying you by videos. You are destroying yourself by talking to people about John Osborne. When they go and investigate and find out the accusations are distorted, you are losing credibility and Hope International is losing credibility.

Of course, every time John receives a call from somebody that is trying to check these things out that they have been told, he becomes freshly aware that you are still talking about him. I asked John a couple of months ago, if he would promise not to talk about anything if the others at Hope and Hartland would promise not to talk about anything. John told me that he would be glad to do that. But I can not go to John anymore and ask him not to say anything or reply to anything when he gets fresh evidence from these telephone calls that you are still talking to people about him and making charges and accusations concerning his moral character.

We are headed toward a pitched battle between truth and error with a magnitude of which we can scarcely comprehend. I believe that it is of vital importance that the leaders that God has chosen to spearhead this work be recognized by God's people on the earth. They have already been commissioned by God Himself. That is clearly evident by the fruit of their ministry. But I believe it would be pleasing to the Lord for His church on earth to recognize publicly their divine appointment, just as the church in the days of the apostles did. And if the true and faithful Seventh-day Adventists really are being led by the Holy Spirit, I think that recognition would be immediate and prompt. I believe the Lord has already decided the timing of this matter and I do not want to be behind the Lord. Some have expressed reservations about running ahead of the Lord. Personally, I am much more concerned about our very grave danger of falling behind the Lord. Being too late is just as bad a timing as being too early.

What is the strongest evidence that could be produced that these men have been called and given a divine commission to the ministry that should be recognized by the people of God on earth? *Acts of the Apostles*, 328 says, "The conversion of sinners and their sanctification through the truth is the strongest proof a minister can have that God has called him to the ministry. The evidence of his apostleship is written upon the hearts of those converted, and is witnessed to by their renewed lives. Christ is formed within, the hope of glory. A minister is greatly strengthened by these seals of his ministry." This strongest evidence has been produced in both of these men. According to inspiration there is no stronger evidence that can be produced. There is *other* evidence that can be produced, but no stronger evidence that can be produced. People coming to the Lord and being baptized and sanctified as a result of these men's ministry is overwhelming evidence to me. Recognizing their divine call, I would have an unclear conscience if I said, "No, let's just wait or delay or procrastinate." All we would be doing by that is giving evidence that we were slow to believe and respond to the divine evidence that the Lord has given to us.

Great consequences to the cause of God hang on this ordination. I believe it will be a most godly way of protesting the apostasy, in the addition to other blessings that it will bring to God's people. The Florida conference disfellowshipped John Osborne for apostasy when he was not even present to defend himself. No charge of apostasy has been sustained against him. I cannot with clear conscience decline from protesting this horrible wickedness. The true and faithful Seventh-day Adventists who are not dead asleep should arise as one man and protest. God has given abundant evidence in the fruit of John Osborne's ministry as to which side this man is on. It is entirely appropriate, I believe, *and not a day too soon* for the true and faithful Seventh-day Adventists to solemnly dedicate to God by fasting and prayer and the laying on of hands those whom God has raised up to defend the truth and expose the apostasy of His professed people.

I realize that there will always be those who are slow to believe. It is one thing to be slow to believe, but is far more dangerous to try to destroy the very thing God is working to build up. It would have been most appropriate immediately after this unbiblical, despotic disfellowshipping (in the light of the fruits that are already evident in John Osborne's ministry) to have an ordination service right then. But now, after so many months have gone by, it is high time for decided action.

I am not against anyone who desires to spend much time researching the subject of baptism, the church, ordination or whatever they want to research. But I am not willing to sit by and wait till everybody is satisfied with their research on whether or not we are going to baptize someone, when people are ready to be baptized. While I am in favor of others doing as much research as they want to concerning baptism, when I believe people are ready to be baptized I am going to baptize them. The same is true in regard to ordination. This is not some new subject. This is not some new issue, as people are trying to imagine. In the Seventh-day Adventist church, we have believed in ordaining people before there ever was a general conference. We believed in ordaining people to the ministry before we ever had what is now called our "church organization." It is not something new. It is not some new issue. It has nothing to do with new light or anything of the kind. It is strictly historic Adventism. Ordaining people to the gospel ministry in harmony with the Lord's instruction given in the New Testament is something that the Christian church has been doing for nearly two thousand years.

This is not something in which we are running ahead of the Lord, in my opinion. If anything, it is something which we are very far behind the Lord and the He is trying to get us to catch up. The question I have to ask myself is, "How hard would the Lord have to hit me on the head before I would recognize that He's trying to get my attention? What would God have to do to get my attention to make me realize that He wants me to do something about this issue?" I hope and pray that the Lord would not have to do something drastic before He would get my attention, before I would think through the situation and would begin to respond. One thing I know for sure, I cannot wait until everyone gets their thinking all straightened out on who and what the church is. Some people might not have that figured out when the Lord returns in the clouds of heaven. If they had been victims of that kind of thinking the apostle Paul never would have been ordained. What would God need to do to convince us that a minister had been given a divine commission to be a minister and should be recognized officially as a minister of the gospel by God's people on earth? What would God have to do to convince us of that?

When I was a young minister, it was expected that a minister would baptize at least a few people every year. In regard to that criterion, at John Osborne's camp meeting this last Friday night, there was a marvelous outpouring of the Holy Spirit. I wasn't there, but

Bob Trefz told me that everyone that was there said that they had never seen anything like it. There was weeping and confession, the Holy Spirit was manifested and there was a call and people came forward -- some for rebaptism, some for baptism for the first time. Last Sabbath fifty one people were baptized. I call that a most marked moving of the Holy Spirit. I have talked to people there that have become Seventh-day Adventists through the ministry. And they are being sanctified. The Holy Spirit is working in their lives. It is a marvelous experience to behold. I have never heard of any Seventh-day Adventist camp meeting anywhere in the world in my life time, where there has been an outpouring of the Holy Spirit of the same nature and extent as the reports I am receiving that happened last Friday night. I am sorry I wasn't there. I was already in Texas when it happened. The people that were there believe that God took control of the meeting and took the reigns into His own hand. There was an outpouring of invitation, reproof and confession among the people that resulted in an experience of pulling together and revival and reformation that was marvelous to behold.

Now Ron, what happened at the Prophecy Countdown camp meeting last Friday night was not of just a human occurrence. It was a supernatural occurrence and it was either from God or from the devil. You can decide which you think it is from. I have already decided where I think it is from. I believe that God is trying to tell us something. A young man that attended the camp meeting was so under conviction that he left early in the week and went and fasted and prayed for the rest of the week. He came back to the camp meeting on Friday night and said he had a message from the Lord that he had to deliver to have a clear conscience. He was allowed to deliver the message. I do not know all the particulars of it, but it involved both invitation and rebuke. And the report I received was that the rebuke was accepted. There followed a wonderful period of confession of sin, of revival, of an invitation, of an acceptance of the call to follow the Lord all the way. People that had been in the valley of decision made up their mind that they were going all the way with the Lord. And a wonderful experience happened Sabbath when these people were baptized, over fifty of them. I call that the moving of the Holy Spirit. I was a little disappointed when I talked to you over the phone about it the other day and you didn't seem to be impressed. I was as excited about that as anything I have seen or heard in the last while.

Several days ago there was also a member of the Rolling Hills Seventh-day Adventist church who began to have some problems and went to a physician. She was told she had terminal cancer. Obviously, to a twenty six year old woman, this would be a most terrible shock. And when she reported it to the Rolling Hills Seventh-day Church they were also in a state of shock and grief at her fate. This last Sabbath afternoon John Osborne and two of his associates from the church went to this young lady and prayed for and anointed her. Early this week when she went back to her physician, the physician was in a state of shock. "There's nothing the matter with you, you're completely healed, what happened? I don't understand what happened." She said, "I can tell you what happened. My pastors anointed me last Sabbath." When the physician heard that, tears started to go down his cheeks and he said, "Well, there's nothing wrong with you. You are healed."

Is God trying to tell us anything or not, when we see people being converted, confessing their sin, being baptized, and people that were baptized months ago having an experience of sanctification? It is the very strongest evidence that a minister can have that God has called him to a ministry. When we see the Holy Spirit poured out on a group of people; when we see people coming into a state of unity; when we see people choosing to forsake sin and confessing to one another; when we see God performing miracles of healing among

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His people; and when we see that God is in earnest to bring about a revival and reformation, and the latter rain that could quickly finish up the work on earth, I ask to myself, "Now how much would God have to do before a person would believe?" I can tell you God has done plenty enough so I believe already. I don't need anymore evidence. I don't have to have one speck more. I believe that God has endorsed the ministry of both of these men.

In addition to everything I've mentioned, I could mention that there are, as a result of the videos that these men have produced, thousands of Seventh-day Adventists world wide that are waking up to the situation in the church (the apostasy). And they are waking up to what they need to be doing to prepare for the coming of the Son of Man.

Jesus always rebuked unbelief. He rebuked those that were slow to believe. He never commended them for that trait of character. I do not want to be under His rebuke. I believe the Lord has given us such abundant evidence that He has put His stamp of approval on these men and has given them a divine commission for the ministry that, if I don't respond, I would actually feel that the curse of God was upon me for being so negligent to recognize the working of the Holy Spirit. I don't need any Bible conferences, study groups, or any more discussions to make this decision. It's time for decided action.

If you and I are ordained ministers of God and we see that the Lord has given this kind of abundant evidence that these men are called to the ministry, and we don't do something about it, how can we sleep at night and have a clear conscience? I can't do it. We plan (unless the Lord sees that I have misread every signal that I have been seeing, and the Lord decides to rebuke us and to delay or halt our way, which I am fully willing for God to do if we are about to make some terrible mistake) to ordain both of these men on the Sabbath of June 13th, at our camp meeting. I wish you could be there.

There is one condition under which we would cancel everything for the present. I have talked to John Osborne on the phone about this. I haven't talked to Bob Trefz specifically, but I know that he would concur. John Osborne and I both concurred that if anyone showed us, from the Scriptures or from the Spirit of Prophecy a statement that indicated that we were making a mistake, we would call everything off. Personally, I don't think anybody is going to find a statement like that, because I think that we have done our homework very well and we are doing exactly what the Lord has asked us to do. But we are open to evidence from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

In statements that have been made to me and to others, you have said that you have felt very hurt that I, (actually it wasn't just me it was more than just one person, but you seem to think that it was just me) decided to do this without obtaining your counsel. I need to address that subject briefly.

First of all, the decision was not made by one individual. It was not even made by two or three or four individuals. It was not decided in some closet at midnight sometime, that we were going to try to pull something off. It has nothing to do with anything like that. The decision was made at a public meeting. We had already done our homework. We had a public forum where we had a panel discussion and we looked at the whole subject of church authority. Questions arose about ordination. We had our Spirit of Prophecy books at the front and we read what Ellen White has told us concerning God's plan for ordination of people to the gospel ministry. We read right out of the Spirit of Prophecy about the ordination of Paul and Barnabas and that it was done at the church at Antioch. When we read it we were asked from the congregation, "Well if it was right for the church at Antioch to do, is it right for us to do it here?" We said, "Yes it is." They said, "Well then, if it is right for us as a church to ordain our pastor would you do it?" We said, yes, we would. I

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still stand on the same statements I made then, I am not ashamed of what we did. We did not do anything irrational. We did not do anything hurried. We did not do anything secret. It was in a public meeting with approximately 100-200 people present.

Would you care to say in public, "Yes, it is right to do it. The Spirit of Prophecy shows that it is right for you to do it, and you can do it, but I won't have anything to do with it." Would you say something like that? How could you contradict yourself right at the same time? If it is right--that has been the whole thesis upon which Steps to Life has been built from the very beginning. The only question that we have ever asked is: Is it right? And if it is right then we must do it.

Now, it is true that there are times when there is something that is right to do, and God wants you to wait to do it. But in this case the Lord has given us abundant evidence that now is the time. In fact, now it is not early. It is getting late.

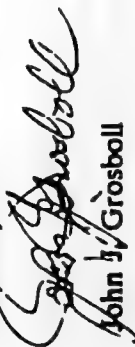
I want to come to this statement that you have made a number of times that you feel hurt that I did not come to you for counsel. I want to make it clear that I counselled with a number of people on this. But you remember, at Housick Falls, NY late last summer or fall when we went for a walk, you spent a great deal of time making a whole series of accusations and charges to me. Later at our board meeting in January, the same thing occurred. At the meeting at Hope in February the same thing occurred. And as a result of our board meeting in January, as I have already mentioned previously in this letter, we felt obligated to conduct an investigation into these charges. When we conducted an investigation into these charges and found that they were unfounded and could not be sustained with evidence, and I had received these communications from you at least these three times, do you think that I felt you were qualified to give to me unbiased counsel on this subject? Frankly, I did not believe, and I still do not believe that you are qualified to give me counsel that is unbiased on this issue. Now, I am willing to receive counsel from you on other subjects. But even if you had not been in England when we had been discussing this issue, I would not have asked you for counsel, because I do not believe you are capable of giving me unbiased counsel on this subject. You are capable of giving me very good counsel on many other subjects, but for some reason, you are so emotionally involved in this issue that you cannot give me unbiased counsel. So I did not seek your counsel, and do not intend to seek your counsel on this particular subject. It was no rejection of you as a person when I did not seek your counsel. It was just that I needed to get unbiased counsel. And when you need unbiased counsel, you need to go to someone who is unbiased on that subject.

Ron, why did you threaten me that you would pull out and not attend our camp meeting? Every accusation you gave me I have investigated and found to be not a valid reason. If a brother has fallen and committed a sin of stumbling, (not a sin of rebellion), and repents and confesses and forsakes that sin, what is the Word of the Lord to you and me as to how we are to relate to that brother? Can we keep bringing it up and still say that we are walking as He walked? (1 John 2:6). Is this not something exceedingly serious that I am talking about? Yet, you keep making accusations about sins that have been confessed and forsaken. Why will you pull out and not attend our camp meeting? Is it because a person made a mistake in judgement when he sang a secular song in a restaurant? Is that why? Why would you pull out and not attend our camp meeting? Is it because you think someone else made a mistake in judgement on the kind of car he purchased? I'm embarrassed to put that in writing. And yet, these are the reasons that you gave to me over the phone. I have yet to hear one reason why you would not attend our camp meeting that, in my mind, I could say had any substance. In addition to saying you were going to pull out

and not attend our camp meeting, you have made several other very strong statements over the telephone in the past few days. You have indicated that you could only go with one, and that wasn't us. You have said that you cannot conscientiously be a part and come to our camp meeting and that you will have to resign from our board if we go through with this. You also stated that by doing this, we would force you to go public that you don't agree with it. Incidentally, I deny that charge. In my opinion, we are not forcing you to do anything. But I do agree that it is appropriate for a person who has threatened to publicly oppose a ministry to not be the board chairman of that ministry.

One day soon we will both be at the end of the road. Ron, I hope that we are still together. I hope we're both still on the same path.

Solemnly,



John J. Grosboll

JG:tk,ht

This is a letter written to my brother, Ron Spear, and because of the conversations conducted between Steps to Life and personnel at Hope International and Hartland, and others it is also being sent to a number of other beloved brothers.

cc: Steps to Life board members

Steps to Life staff

Colin Standish

Ralph Larson

Bob Trefz

John Osborne

Joe Crews

Bob Bresnahan

Vernon Sparks

Clark Floyd

Jack Kendall

Larry Hawkins

Gwen Hawkins

Ralph Moss

The Final Appeal To the Steps to Life Board

John's letter to me received. The letter has appealed to me to understand what is the church. My understanding of the church has not changed. John, you have a very serious missing link in your understanding of what is the church organization. Was it ordained of God? Then who has the authority now to say that God is finished with the organization? We all believe that the final phase of the church will be made up of only faithful, loyal, and obedient people to all truth. There will be faithful pastors leaders, and laymen who make up this group. I am sure we agree on this.

Do not compare baptism and ordination together. Baptism is essential, if at all possible, for salvation. Ordination is not. Much dialogue went into the discussion of baptism with the different ministries. There has been no dialogue over this ordination.

John, you state that you would not counsel with Colin and me because of our bias over John Osborne. We are both sorry for this statement. We cannot understand how you could under-take a serious move, such as a decision to ordain men to the ministry, without first counselling with us. Bob Trefz and John Osborne could put both your and Ralph Larson's ordination and church membership on the line, for what? If you do this it will be only days or weeks until the Southwestern Union and Pacific Union will notify each of you that you are no longer members or ordained ministers in the Seventh-day Adventist church.

Bob Trefz and John Osborne will not have any more power or authority than they do now. They are both ordained local elders. Biblically they have the right to baptize. The leaders on many occasion have authorized local elders to baptize.

Don't you see you are giving those who want to destroy us the ammunition to do so? Men in high places are anxious to tar and feather those in the straight testimony ministry. And now you are going to provide them the tar and the feathers to do it.

The day may come when we are all disfellowshipped and defrocked. Then we will need to meet together to discuss what God wants us to do. But not now. This very impetuous move at this time will divide our ministries, because Hope and Hartland cannot conscientiously move with you on this.

It will accomplish absolutely nothing but dissension at a time when we should be pressing together. This decision does not in any way refer to our conscientious reason for not preaching with John Osborne. We have had nothing to say about your preaching with him, but we cannot do so.

But to try and force us into this kind of situation without giving us a chance to discuss it; this is a very serious mistake. When you had two senior pastors on your board representing two

organizations the Christian thing to do was to give us the opportunity to respond. But we were told the ordination would take place at the Steps to Life Camp meeting where we had been invited to preach months ago.

John Osborne was not on the agenda when we accepted the invitation. You say that Prophecy Countdown voted for ordination of John Osborne. Then they should have done it at his camp meeting and not involved the leading pastors of the two other organizations. If it had been done at the Florida meeting we would have said it was a mistake, but it would not have caused this serious rupture in our relationship.

John you believe that I would have agreed to the ordination of Bob Trefz, but that I have taken this stand, because of my "bias" on John Osborne. This is entirely untrue. I told you on the phone I had not a problem with Bob personally, but we do have a problem with John. Our file backs up our reasons for this and we are as conscientious on this as you are on your stand to be John's protector. Hope International is not comfortable ordaining anybody to the ministry.

If you move forward with this in spite of this counsel then you must accept the full responsibility for what will take place. This may go down in history as the greatest mistake ever made by the independent ministries. Marshall may have moved toward such a venture, but I know he would have listened to Colin and me, and would not have ruptured the working of our ministries together over an issue that has absolutely no value for the finishing of God's work.

I have honestly tried to treat the ministry of Steps to Life on the same level as I would treat my own ministry. I traveled with Marshall helping him to an exposure to our constituency of supporters, praising God for his life and ministry. But now to be treated by his brother and Steps to Life board members in this way has been the most difficult thing I have faced in my ten years in the independent ministry, and possibly my entire forty years of preaching.

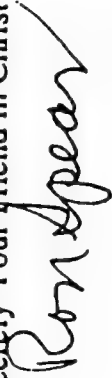
I had to cancel my preaching in Ohio, and I was in no shape to come to Wichita, even if you were not carrying out the ordination. I have been walking the beach in western Washington state asking God to heal my exhaustion. For months I have traveled almost every week-end to preach. I returned from England to the Maine camp meeting, and on home to this serious fracture in our relationship. It was more than my worn body and mind could handle. I have to leave this Sunday for the meetings in the Far East. With God's healing, I will be ready to go again for Him. At sixty-eight I am pressing myself continually to the limit of my physical, mental, and spiritual resources. I live for one reason only, and that is to do God's will and to finish His work.

I appeal to all of you, please do not carry out this ordination. My statement to you, John, on the phone was if you are determined to do this, it can be done at Prophecy Countdown Church. Do not involve the Steps to Life staff and board with such a precarious move at such a tragic time. I have no bitterness against anyone, not even John Osborne. I am sorry for him.

If this ordination is carried out, you will be forced to accept this document as my resignation from the board. I thought of calling a conference-call board meeting over this issue but was not up to arguing the serious pros and cons. It would have taken a two-thirds majority vote to approve it, which probably would not have passed, considering the present attitudes.

I ask that in all courtesy to my ministry and relationship to Steps to Life, that this statement be made available to every board member and, also to Ralph Larson, Bob Trcfz., and John Osborne.

Sincerely Your Friend in Christ



P.S. These statements are not to excite more discussion on John Osborne. I have only great remorse that such a situation now exists, and only pray that in the near future this situation will change, that we can again work together. A complete response to your understanding of what is the church will be forth-coming.

Please study carefully the following statements: "Christ did not say to them, Ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven; but He showed them the obstacle which prevented them from entering was of their own creating. The door was still open to these Jewish leaders; the invitation was still held out. Christ longed to see them convicted and converted.

"The priests and elders of Israel spent their lives in religious ceremonies, which they regarded as too sacred to be connected with secular business. Therefore their lives were supposed to be wholly religious. But they performed their ceremonies to be seen by men that they might be thought by the world to be pious and devoted. While professing to obey they refused to render obedience to God. They were not doers of the truth which they professed to teach." Christ's Object Lessons 277, 278

"The Lord has declared that the history of the past shall be rehearsed as we enter upon the closing work. Every truth that He has given for these last days is to be proclaimed to the world. Every pillar that He has established is to be strengthened. We cannot now step off the foundation that God has established. We cannot now enter into any new organization; for this would mean apostasy from the truth." Selected Messages, book 2, 390

Right up to the stoning of Stephen the door was open to the corrupt leaders. God has established this church and we have no evidence that He has now divorced himself from the organization. In our concept of the church we must still see that the organization is still a factor that we must consider and deal with, in areas that do not deal with a "Thus saith the Lord", or violating our conscience.

although I supported him, I now have the high honor and the great privilege to follow in his footsteps and to understand personally for myself how it feels to have my closest and dearest friends turn on me and become my most fierce and bitter enemies.

You are calling people around the country and attempting to influence them against me and to use their influence to influence my administrative committee against me. Since I started writing this postscript, Joe Crews has called and specifically asked to talk with Ron Reeves. Evidently you have decided that since I will not yield my convictions on this issue, an all-out effort must be made to influence my associates and board members against me. I am not going to engage in this political warfare by trying to influence anybody to stand with me. I want everyone to look at the evidence, pray, and decide on the weight of the evidence.

Our decisions have not been made without prayer and counsel of the brethren. Our decisions were not made by a few private individuals--I have an official request from a Seventh-day Adventist Church to ordain two men. These men have probably been evaluated and examined on every level by more people over a longer period of time than any two candidates for ordination in the history of the second advent movement.

I openly challenge you to compare the fruit of their ministry with the fruit of any other Seventh-day Adventist minister in the United States who is up for ordination this year. We have not done anything in secret. Everything has been open and clear as the day. We are following gospel order for ordination as spelled out in the book of Acts more closely than I have ever seen any conference do. The idea that I should have called a board meeting etc. before making this decision is not required according to the New Testament. The decision rests not with boards or committees of institutions, but with the church itself who is under divine obligation to recognize the divine commission that the Holy Spirit places upon those whom God has chosen to be His ministers. When the Holy Spirit's commission is recognized by the church and other ordained ministers, they then have a moral obligation to publicly recognize their divine appointment." (AA 161)

A most serious, in fact devastating question could be asked at this point--if we are all being led by the same spirit, why are we having this conflict? Are we sure that everything we are saying, doing and planning is being indited by the Holy Spirit?

Incidentally, when the final decision was made to baptize, it was made by only a few ministers in a very limited amount of time and they did not then, or at any subsequent time ask their boards for permission to obey the Word of God. They did not need to because the decision was based on the Word of God and they had been praying and studying the issue for a long time. You were one of those ministers. At that very time (three years ago) you were willing to ordain men to the gospel ministry at our camp meeting.

June 4, 1992 (edited June 8, 1992)

P.S.

Dear Ron,

I understand today that you have contacted Ron Reeves, and asked him to call a special Steps to Life Board meeting to censure me for not obtaining counsel from you and Colin before making this decision.

Did you know Ron that you cannot take anything away from me? If you are only seeking to reduce my influence on my board or at Steps to Life Ministries, why don't we talk about what would be perceived in this world as a real loss? If the Lord permitted my wife and my children to be removed from me and my job and responsibilities at Steps to Life and every material possession was taken away and I were sent out homeless and penniless -- an exile or a prisoner with no liberty -- if, after "losing" all of this I was sentenced to be slain, I would not consider myself really to have lost anything, because I have dedicated and given all these to the Lord long ago. As long as I have Jesus, I am happy and content, and if the Lord decides that I need any kind of a bitter draft or trial in this world to shape my character for heaven, praise the Lord. It is worth anything and everything to be saved. I did not choose this crisis, but since I am in it I rejoice at the opportunity of laying everything on the line and am ready to lose all for the Word of God that I believe. I can show to anyone a plain "thus saith the Lord" for what I believe and teach. If you are standing on a plain "thus saith the Lord" you do not need committees, church s, or any conferences for that belief--God has already settled it in His Word. And one man with the truth, can stand against the whole world. It has been done many times, and I rejoice in being allowed to suffer whatever the Lord allows you to bring upon me for the sake of the Word of God.

The first time that I saw my brother Marshall lay everything on the line for what he believed, I was so electrified that when talking to my parents long distance that same evening, I indicated to them that I had never admired by brother so much as now. He was being persecuted from all levels of the "church organization" for his views about the church, among other things. I knew that these views were supported by the Word of God and I was happy to be able to support him as he laid everything on the line and stood apparently all alone. There was not a single minister on the payroll of the Seventh-day Adventist church, there was not a single evangelist or pastor who would stand with him. The entire organization of the church was apparently opposed. If you have the Word of God, a plain thus saith the Lord, on your side, God is always a majority. But in this world the truth is often in Gethsemane or on the cross. After that I watched Marshall lay everything on the line a number of times,

If we should get permission from a board to baptize and to ordain, which are based on the Word of God, it is only a short step before we would need to get permission from the board about which day to go to church. When I first talked to you about this on the telephone a few days ago, you didn't see a problem in ordaining Bob Trefz. That is strong evidence that your real objection was not concerning ordination at all, but only whether we should ordain John Osborne. But now, in an effort to block John Osborne's ordination you have gone to those who do not hold the New Testament concept of the church like we do and united with them in attempting to claim that this needs to be studied out, etc -- that it is a new issue, etc. It may be a new issue for them, but it is not for us.

If you turn back from the light that you formerly believed, I tremble for you. That is when light becomes darkness, truth becomes error and eventually the door of salvation closes. You and I have watched this happen to others. Oh Ron, are you and I in the time of our personal shaking -- in that period of time of our own personal manifestation for a final eternal decision about our destiny. No former experience in my life has given me such a vivid picture of the reality of the judgement of the living. Oh Ron, my bowels of compassion go out to you, you have no idea of the affections of my heart toward you.

One day soon Jesus is coming. Over and over in my mind I have asked myself the question the last few days, when it is all over, and I look back at the decisions I made today and the positions I stood for today, will it look like it was all petty and narrow-minded and self-serving? Or will I be glad that I stood up and protested the apostasy? Will I be glad that I was willing to risk everything to support those who were doing everything in their ability to teach and preach the truth and concerning whom the Holy Spirit has borne witness with power? Will I be glad that the commands in the Word of God were the standard that governed my decisions and conduct?

It was while I was a pastor in North Dakota that I received the official notice of your son's death in Vietnam. I would like very much to someday soon be introduced and become an everlasting friend of this young man and all the other members of your family. In this world we only know in part. But there, all the perplexities, all the trials we did not understand here will be made plain. I want to have the pleasant memory, that for the entire time of sojourn in this world, I had no feelings but of Christian love and kindness for you and your entire family and by the grace of God I trust that this will always be my experience. "Many waters cannot quench love, Nor can the floods drown it." Song of Solomon 8:7

With Christian Affection,

John A. Grosboll
John A. Grosboll

Director: John J. Grosboll

steps

Ministries

June 17, 1992

Dear Friend,

On June 13, 1992, John Wesley Osborne Jr., Robert Joseph Trefz and Michael John Thompson were ordained to the gospel ministry at the Steps to Life Campmeeting near Wichita Kansas.

Following is a brief historical description of how that event came to be. This description is organized in the following manner for the benefit of those who might be interested in one particular area of study:

Section 1: The most fundamental question—who has the right to ordain?

Section 2: The Biblical Evidence on which this decision is based. This section is printed separately—Elder Ralph Larson answered this question succinctly in his ordination sermon, the script for the same is enclosed with this letter.

Section 3: What qualifications should a person have or not have to be ordained.

Section 4: How was the decision made?

Section 5: How important is ordination?

SECTION 1: WHO HAS THE RIGHT TO ORDAIN?

God is the one who ordains men to be His messengers. No human being has the right to attempt to choose concerning this matter. (See Exodus 4:13, 14) To ordain persons is to select or choose them for a certain mission—the scripture says concerning Jesus that “. . . He called to Himself His disciples and chose from them twelve whom He named apostles.” Luke 6:13 Concerning this same event Mark says that “. . . He called to Himself whom He wished and they went out to Him and He appointed twelve that they should be with Him and that He might send them to preach” Mark 3:13, 14.

Since Jesus was divine as well as human, He had the authority to do as just described in the Scripture. Since this is the case, the question might be asked, “why then do men ordain other men if this is the prerogative of God to choose His messengers?” Ellen White confirms the scriptural teaching above while at the same time showing how and why ordination by men was divinely commanded. In *Acts of the Apostles* Ellen White reveals the following facts about the ordination of Paul and Barnabas: (See Endnote 1)

1. They first received their commission from God Himself.
2. Before they were formally ordained the Lord blessed their labors—there was fruit or evidence that God was working through them.
3. God saw that through a formal authorization by the church (ordination) of their ministry, Paul and Barnabas would have an advantage in their work.
4. The Holy Spirit taught the church to solemnly dedicate Paul and Barnabas to God by fasting and prayer and the laying on of hands.
5. By this formal ordination of the church Paul and Barnabas were not only authorized by the church to teach the truth, but to perform the rite of baptism and to organize churches, and were invested with full ecclesiastical authority.
6. This ordination did not add any new grace or qualification but was simply a public recognition of the divine appointment and commission they had already received.

7. This ordination was not conducted by the worldwide church or even a group of churches but by a local church. (The ordination at the Steps to Life campmeeting was done at the request of local Adventist churches.)

8. God foresaw that Paul and Barnabas would be accused as heretics by other Christians (see *Sketches from the Life of Paul* page 226) and the public setting apart for the work of the ministry was to place their work above challenge.

9. It is a serious mistake to neglect or despise a person whom God has appointed as one of His messengers.

It is clear then that the authority to ordain rests with the people of God, in the case of the Apostle Paul, he was ordained by the local church at Antioch.

SECTION 2 IS ENCLOSED SEPARATELY.

SECTION 3: WHAT QUALIFICATIONS SHOULD A PERSON HAVE TO BE ORDAINED?

What is the strongest evidence that a minister can have of a divine call to the ministry? *Acts of the Apostles*, 328 says, “The conversion of sinners and their sanctification through the truth is the strongest proof a minister can have that God has called him to the ministry. The evidence of his apostleship is written upon the hearts of those converted, and is witnessed to by their renewed lives. Christ is formed within, the hope of glory. A minister is greatly strengthened by these seals of his ministry.”

In chapter 34 of *Acts of the Apostles* Ellen White states the qualifications and work of the gospel minister. She says that it is a position of grave responsibility and that the minister is to be a spiritual guardian of the people, a spiritual watchman who has the solemn responsibility “to sound the note of alarm at the approach of the enemy. . . . In trumpet tones their voices are to be lifted, and never are they to sound one wavering, uncertain note. . . . He has but one object in view—the saving of the lost.” *Acts of the Apostles* pages 361, 362.

The churches where these ministers labor, who have just been ordained, have seen these men risk everything in this world to sound the note of alarm to God's people today. Many of you have received the note of warning from these men through their videos. The Holy Spirit has borne witness to their ministry in a marked manner in the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of those who have come into the church under their ministry.

God has called different people to give different messages and we must be careful not to become critical of someone else to whom the Lord has given a different message than we have been called to bear: “Some messages come as the Lord's hammer, to break down the workings of Satan and turn men to the living God. But mingled with this decided work of standing in defense of the truth is Christ's consolation, which comes when repentance reveals what sin really is. And while some are called to battle desperately with an evil work, there is another kind of message to be borne to the ones who, while suffering wrong, have endured the temptation to harbor a sense of injustice and cherish it. Again, some have the gift given them of God to act as organizers. Others fill their place as they work in retirement, feeling themselves little and unknown, with but few to recognize their work, and none to pity their mistakes or praise their victories. But the Lord uses all these elements. No one man can fill every place, and God's great work must go forward. *Upward Look* page 273

One of the astonishing features of the gospel plan is that Jesus has chosen to send His message of grace and salvation to the world not through angels who never make a mistake but through fallen, erring, weak mortal men who themselves can only be saved in the very same way as those to whom they present the gospel message. Satan tries to defeat the work of every minister of the gospel by fostering a focus on the supposed or real mistakes or character defects of the messengers rather than where we should always be looking. We should always focus our attention on the message that is being given. A reception of the gospel message will save the soul whether

the minister is saved or lost. In the same way a rejection of the gospel message will doom the soul whether the minister is saved or lost. If you are fortunate enough to have an ordained minister in your church who is preaching historic Adventism—a true Bible preacher who gives the note of warning with no uncertain notes be careful how you reject the message because of reports you receive about the messenger—if you reject the message you are not rejecting a man, you are rejecting the One who inspired the message. Your soul is in deep peril. This is one of the fearful traps for God's people today.

When Jesus ordained His twelve disciples, Ellen White has the following to say about their condition of character. "All the disciples had serious faults when Jesus called them to His service. Even John, who came into closest association with the meek and lowly One, was not himself naturally meek and yielding. He and his brother were called 'the sons of thunder.' While they were with Jesus, any slight shown to Him aroused their indignation and combativeness. Evil temper, revenge, the spirit of criticism, were all in the beloved disciple. He was proud, and ambitious to be first in the kingdom of God. But day by day, in contrast with his own violent spirit he beheld the tenderness and forbearance of Jesus, and heard His lessons of humility and patience. He opened his heart to the divine influence, and became not only a hearer but a doer of the Saviour's words. Self was hid in Christ. He learned to wear the yoke of Christ and to bear His burden." DA 295

It was possible to lose your soul in Jesus' day because you focused your attention on the faults of His disciples. (As you read the gospel story in your Bible you will find that the Pharisees were constantly doing this and often even bringing false accusation against the disciples of Jesus.) The same is still true today. The men that were ordained at the Steps to Life camp meeting have been used in a mighty way by the Lord to warn His people of real present and impending dangers. But many have developed feelings of bitterness toward them and an avalanche of gossip has been launched against them. In Paul's day the leaders of the church developed feelings of bitterness toward the apostle to the gentiles. (AA 417) "The same spirit is still leading to the same results. A neglect to appreciate and improve the provisions of divine grace has deprived the church of many a blessing. . . . Satan is constantly working through his agents to dishearten and destroy those whom God has chosen to accomplish a great and good work. They may be ready to sacrifice even life itself for the advancement of the cause of Christ, yet the great deceiver will suggest to their brethren doubts concerning them which, if entertained, would undermine confidence in their integrity of character, and thus cripple their usefulness." AA 417, 418

Be careful friend that you do not believe every report you hear or read. Be careful that you are not found an agent for the devil in the day of judgement. There are many Seventh-day Adventists who, if they had the same attitude they are manifesting today, would have rejected the apostles of Jesus because of their supposed or real defects of character.

SECTION 4: HOW WAS THE DECISION TO ORDAIN ARRIVED AT?

Although God is the One—the Only One—who chooses His messengers, the church is the body of Christ, and the church that is being led by the Holy Spirit, God's ministers who are being led by the Holy Spirit will recognize the call of God to a minister by the fruit and leading of the Holy Spirit just as the church in Antioch did.

"God has a church. It is not the great cathedral, neither is it the national establishment, neither is it the various denominations; it is the people who love God and keep His commandments. 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them' (Matt. 18:20). Where Christ is even among the humble few, this is Christ's church, for the presence of the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity can alone constitute a church." *Upward Look* page 315

The divine call to these men who were ordained was recognized by God's people, by His church, by those who love God and keep His commandments. These Seventh-day Adventist Christians made a formal official request to some of us in Special Ministries to ordain these men.

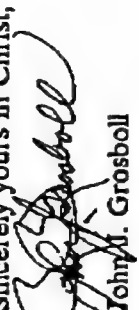
When hundreds of Seventh-day Adventist Christians—whole churches—made this request and an examination of the evidence had revealed that the marked working of the Holy Spirit was evident in their ministry, we decided that we had an obligation to God and His people to fulfill this request. I must say that it was with very great joy that I participated in fulfilling this request because I am always glad to see an increase in the number of ordained ministers who are giving the trumpet a certain sound.

There are people in high places in the Seventh-day Adventist Church "organization" who have "disfellowshipped" or "censured" these men making accusations of apostasy. We are very sorry that the apostasy in the Seventh-day Adventist church has reached such magnitude that attempts would be made to disfellowship a Seventh-day Adventist minister for apostasy when no charge of apostasy has been sustained and when he is not even present to defend himself. It is high time for God's true people—those who love God and obey His commandments—to stand up and defend the truth and support those messengers that God has sent as His official ambassadors, His official watchmen to warn His people of their imminent danger. We have tried to do our full duty to help God's people to recognize that these men are truly messengers of the Lord sent with a true warning message to God's people to awaken them from the sleep of death, to arouse and contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. (Jude 3) They are loyal, faithful Seventh-day Adventists who believe the same precious truth that our pioneers believed and that I hope you believe.

SECTION 5: HOW IMPORTANT IS ORDAINATION?

The ordination of these men does not impart any new grace or virtue to them that they did not have before but it is a public recognition by God's people and ministers that we have recognized their divine call to the gospel ministry as seen in the fruit of their ministry. As the Holy Spirit laid upon the Antioch church the responsibility to publicly recognize the call of God to His messengers by ordaining them so we believe that we had a divinely ordered obligation to publicly affirm our conviction that these men have been called to the gospel ministry. "Their ordination was a public recognition of their divine appointment." AA 161.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



John H. Grosboll

P.S. You may order a video of the ordination service by calling or writing Steps to Life P.O. Box 782828 Wichita, Kansas 67278; telephone 316/788-5559 fax 316/788-6900 (Price \$12.50)

1. "At the time of Paul's conversion, the Lord had declared that he was to be made a minister to the Gentiles, . . . Paul himself, later in his Christian experience, while praying in the temple at Jerusalem, had been visited by an angel from heaven, who bade him, 'Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.' Acts 22:21. Thus the Lord had given Paul his commission to enter the broad missionary field of the Gentile world. . . . God had abundantly blessed the labors of Paul and Barnabas during the year they remained with the believers in Antioch. But neither of them had as yet been formally ordained to the gospel ministry. They had now reached a point in their Christian experience why God was about to entrust them with the carrying forward of a difficult missionary enterprise, in the prosecution of which they would need every advantage that could be obtained through the agency of the church. There were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manac, . . . and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.' Before being sent forth as missionaries to the heathen world, these apostles were solemnly dedicated to God by fasting and prayer and the laying on of hands. Thus they were authorized by the church, not only to teach the truth, but to perform the rite of baptism and to organize churches, being invested with full ecclesiastical authority.

"The Christian church was at this time entering upon an important era. The work of proclaiming the gospel message among the Gentiles was now to be prosecuted with vigor; and as a result the church was to be strengthened by a great ingathering of souls. The Apostles who had been appointed to lead out in this work would be exposed to suspicion, prejudice, and jealousy. Their teachings concerning the breaking down of 'the middle wall of partition' (Ephesians 2:14) that had so long separated the Jewish and the Gentile world, would naturally subject them to the charge of heresy, and their authority as ministers of the gospel would be questioned by many zealous, believing Jews. God foresaw the difficulties that His servants would be called to meet, and in order that their work should be above challenge, He instructed the church by revelation to set them apart publicly to the work of the ministry. Their ordination was a public recognition of their divine appointment to bear to the Gentiles the glad tidings of the gospel.

"Both Paul and Barnabas had already received their commission from God Himself, and the ceremony of the laying on of hands added no new grace or virtual qualification. It was an acknowledged form of designation to an appointed office and a recognition of one's authority in that office. By it the seal of the church was set upon the work of God. . . . in the setting apart of these two apostles, there is no record indicating that any virtue was imparted by the mere act of laying on of hands. There is only the simple record of their ordination and of the bearing that it had on their future work.

"The circumstances connected with the separation of Paul and Barnabas by the Holy Spirit to a definite line of service show clearly that the Lord works through appointed agencies in His organized church. . . . The Holy Spirit, again bearing witness concerning Paul as a chosen vessel to bear the gospel to the Gentiles, laid upon the church the work of ordaining him and his fellow laborer. . . . To neglect or despise those whom God has appointed to bear the responsibilities of leadership in connection with the advancement of the truth, is to reject the means that He has ordained for the help, encouragement, and strength of His people." *Acts of the Apostles* pages 159-164

Ordained to a Mission

given by Elder Ralph Larson at the Steps to Life Camp Meeting, June 13, 1992

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Acts 13:1-4: "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from there they sailed to Cyprus."

This is an interesting situation which is worthy of study and reflection. These men, Saul and Barnabas, were ordained, in the Bible usage of that term, by the laying on of hands. They were not being ordained to an office. They were being ordained to a mission, a needed ministry for a specific group of people.

They were not ordained to a church organization or in the name of a church organization. They were not starting a new church, they were not starting a new organization. Far from it. They had been with the believers and the organization for years, and now they were simply being assigned to a mission by their fellow believers.

Likewise, the men who we are ordaining today are being ordained to a mission. We are most emphatically not starting a new organization. We are not starting a separate church. Wherever these men preach and teach, they will urge the people not to leave the Seventh-day Adventist church, which we all devoutly believe is God's true church in our time. They will endeavor to assist those who are trying to be faithful and loyal to the truth and to the church under difficult circumstances.

Will this be misinterpreted and misrepresented? Perhaps. But, we are not starting a new organization. We are not starting a separate church, and there is a limit to how much we can permit ourselves to be

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guided by the thinking of those who do not wish us well. We are looking at the reality that many of our church members are being spiritually neglected, if not worse. They have a great need. It is to meet that need that these men are being ordained just as were Barnabas and Saul.

The Call of the People

From New Testament times until now, true biblical ordination has always been a response to the call of God's people. We are finding that to be true in our experience today. Not long ago several of us were taking part in a round table discussion at Prophecy Countdown camp meeting in Florida. Biblical and Spirit of Prophecy principles were being set forth in regard to the church, its authority, and its ministry. This produced a question from the floor: "If these things are true, why cannot our chosen pastors be ordained?"

It was a valid question, and so, after satisfying ourselves that this was indeed the desire of the people, we arranged for the ordination that will take place here today, a response to the call of the people.

Let us pause to define our terms. Who are the people of whom we speak? Primarily, they are the

They were not starting a new church, they were not starting a new organization. Far from it.

members of the Rolling Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Steps to Life Seventh-day Adventist Church and a home church in South Dakota. In a larger sense, they are the historic Seventh-day Adventists all throughout the land. They are church members who are trying to be true to our pure historic faith and are therefore being dealt with as second class members in many places, are being harassed and ridiculed in many places, and are being hounded out of church and Sabbath School offices and even out of church membership. To varying

degrees, they are being persecuted for the purity of their faith.

Like persecuted Christians of other times, they do not find it possible to be in full contact or communication with each other, but we who travel among them can testify to the oneness of their spirit, a oneness that is the result of their shared devotion to our Scriptural message and to the Spirit of Prophecy.

In view of Ellen White's warning that "error is never harmless," (5T 292), and that:

"God is displeased with us when we go to listen to error, without being obliged to go; for unless He sends us to those meeting where error is forced home to the people by the power of the will, He will not keep us. The angels cease their watchful care over us, and we are left to the buffetings of the enemy, to be darkened and weakened by him and the power of his evil angels; and the light around us becomes contaminated with darkness."

Many of them, therefore, are finding it necessary to establish separate worship services in such places as they can secure. At the present time we hear of hundreds of home worship services being conducted across the country, and we doubt not that there will eventually be thousands, unless conditions in the church are improved.

These are the people who are asking, Who shall serve us? Who shall minister to us? Is our spiritual welfare a concern to anyone?

At present many are being ministered to by audio and video tapes and by occasional visits from traveling ministers. And during this year two instruction courses for lay ministers have been attended by 44 students. Two more such courses are scheduled which may well double that number. Yet this does not altogether meet the need. So—the people who are calling are the historic Seventh-day Adventists who wish to remain true to the purity of their faith.

And what of the call? The specific call in this case is for the ordination of three ministers who have been serving for several years. Is this justifiable? We will find the answer in the Scriptures. Here we must acknowledge our indebtedness to Dr. V. Norskov Olsen, the retired president of Loma

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Linda University, and his monumental and scholarly book, *Myth and Truth, Church, Priesthood, and Ordination*. He has gathered together all of the relevant Scriptural material and much historical material for our consideration

What Does "Ordination" Signify?

One of the truths that Dr. Olsen places before us is that in our time the word *ordination* is seldom used in a scriptural manner. The very word has a Latin source and was used in the Catholic church to describe a special act of God which miraculously bestowed upon certain persons the authority to act in God's name and with God's authority in all circumstances. Along with this came a second miracle, the bestowal of an "indelible character," so that the person still spoke and acted with the full authority of God regardless of the possible wickedness of his personal life.

In contrast with this, Dr. Olsen demonstrates that the word *ordain* in the New Testament is uniformly translated from Greek words that mean to choose, to select, to appoint, to commission (as we have seen in Acts chapter 13), and that these are actions taken by God's people.

Thus, the first seven deacons were chosen by the people (Acts 6); those who traveled with Paul were chosen by the churches (2 Cor. 8:19, 23).

Biblical ordination is an act of the people.

Timothy was chosen by Paul on the basis that he was "well reported of by the brethren" (Acts 16:2), and was doubtless one of those whom Paul describes as "chosen by the churches" in 2 Corinthians 8. So biblical ordination is an act of the people.

The Protestant Reformers reacted so strongly against the Catholic-magical doctrine of ordination that some of them avoided ordination ceremonies altogether. Luther wrote that:

"Ordination, if it is anything at all, is nothing else than a certain rite whereby one is called to the ministry of the church." Olsen, page 153.

Called, of course, by the people.

John Calvin was never ordained, nor was his associate in Geneva, Farel. Philip Melancthon,

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Luther's associate and the most brilliant theologian of the Lutheran movement, was not ordained. All of them responded to the call of the people. When I say never ordained, I mean it in the Catholic sense. All of them responded to the call of God's people, which they understood to be in harmony with the practices of the New Testament.

The Laying on of Hands

What, then, of the laying on of hands? Since we have just noticed the attitude of the Reformers that the call of the people took priority over any and all ceremonies, we are not surprised to learn that they were cautious about the laying on of hands. They saw the laying on of hands as acceptable only if it were clearly understood that it indicated a choice or appointment of the people and not a magical or miraculous act of God.

Speaking about a candidate for the ministry, John Calvin writes:

"As to the manner of introducing him, it is good to use the imposition of hands, which ceremony was observed by the apostles and then in the ancient Church, providing that it takes place without superstition and without offence. But because there has been much superstition in the past, and scandal might result, it is better to abstain from it because of the infirmity of the times."

As we consider the biblical examples of the laying on of hands, two things are clearly apparent. First, it was frequently done by the people, and, second, the meaning of the act was uniformly to signify a transfer of one kind or another.

In Jacob's laying of hands on the sons of Joseph, we see the transfer of a blessing (Gen. 48:14). When Moses laid his hands on the head of Joshua there was a transfer of leadership and authority. When a sinner laid his hands on the head of a sacrificial lamb there was a transfer of guilt. When the congregation laid their hands on the heads of the Levites there was a transfer of priestly privilege. When the apostles and people together laid their hands on the heads of the first seven deacons there was a transfer of authority to distribute food. When the people in Antioch laid their hands on the heads of Barnabas and Saul before their first missionary journey there was a transfer and extension of ministry. The idea was, apparently, "Since we cannot all go to minister to the Gentiles, you will go and do it in our behalf."

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So the involvement of the people in both the choosing and the laying on of hands is clear. This leads us to the all important question, by what right did the people call an individual to service (ministry), and by what right did they lay hands on him?

The answer is found in four passages of Scripture:

1 Peter 2:5: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

1 Peter 2:9: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

Rev. 1:6: "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."

Rev. 5:10: "And has made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth."

The Priesthood of Believers

Here we see the great foundational principle of the priesthood of all believers, the principle that helped to free the Reformers from the bondage of Rome. Notice these words from Luther:

"We are all priests, as many of us as are Christians. We are all consecrated priests through baptism." Olsen, p. 33

Long before Luther's time the same truth had been taught by Wycliffe and John Huss, the morning stars of the Reformation. Olsen summarizes his chapter on the priesthood of believers with this statement:

"Ecclesiology (the doctrine of the church) can only be true to the New Testament when the proper place . . . is given to the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers." p. 65

A lady recently reported to me that she had phoned a certain high ranking church official to ask about the treatment of a certain minister. He told her, in effect, that it was none of her business. She very quickly and firmly and properly corrected him, reminding him that he had been appointed to serve the church members, not to lord over them. As Olsen writes,

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"The ministry is placed within the congregation, and not above it." p. 171

So we are, each and every one, a sharer in the priesthood of all believers. We may, for purposes of order and efficiency and convenience, delegate the privilege of acting for us in certain respects to others, but if those delegated privileges are misused and abused, and if false doctrines are taught or approved or even tolerated by those in authority, we can certainly take the privilege back.

One of the privileges of our priesthood is, in the fear of God, to choose whom we wish to serve us, to appoint them, and to consecrate or ordain them by the laying on of hands. No group has a right to take this privilege from us and claim it only for themselves.

Let it be clearly understood that we are NOT doing this in the name of the Seventh-day Adventist organization, or by the authority of the Seventh-day Adventist organization. We are doing this by the scriptural authority of the priesthood of all believers and for the benefit of the needy historic Seventh-day Adventists.

Dr. Olsen describes the attitudes of the Reformers in this way:

"Because of (the church) being the priesthood of believers, the official ministry is a representative ministry, also referred to as a delegated or transferral ministry. Here the appointment is of basic significance; the laying on of hands is a ritual, and not necessary; but it was thought to be meaningful if done within a true theological and ecclesiastical framework." p. 178

Notice the words, a true theological framework. It follows, then, that those who hold a false theology cannot properly ordain. I had the privilege of being ordained in the year 1948 by men whose conscience was as true to duty as the needle to the pole, and who, I do not doubt, would have stood for the right though the heavens fell. They would not for a moment have tolerated the preaching of false doctrines in their churches, nor would they have even considered ordaining me if I had been tainted with any false doctrine. I believe that heaven approved of

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that ordination. I do not believe that any holders of false doctrines can revoke that ordination.

We quote from *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 162, in reference to the scripture that we read at the beginning in Acts chapter 13: "When the ministers of the church of believers in Antioch laid their hands upon Paul and Barnabas, they, by that action, asked God to bestow His blessing upon the chosen apostles in their devotion to the specific work to which they had been appointed."

It follows, then, that those who hold a false theology cannot properly ordain.

Thus, what was done for me, I will gladly do for others. When those church members who are trying, against awesome odds, to be true to our pure historic faith call for help, I will not hesitate to help them. I am a servant. And when the call of these people for ministers brings forth a response from three strong and dedicated men like John Osborne, Mike Thompson and Bob Trefz, I will gladly take part in a biblical ordination service for them. The call of the people must not be ignored. Let us thank our God for the response to that call on the part of these three men, and let us pray for God's richest blessings upon their ministry.

Ordained to a Mission

Welcome

Welcome to the 1992 Steps to Life camp meeting. We are so glad you could join us as we worship the Lord together. Please pray for the blessing of the Holy Spirit today during the services this morning, the ceremonies of baptism and ordination this afternoon, and the evening meeting tonight. God is eager to give us a Sabbath blessing. Let us not, by our conduct, thoughts, or speech lose that blessing. May self be hid in Jesus, individually, and corporately.

We would also like to extend a special invitation to come tomorrow morning to the new Steps to Life facilities. Pastor John Osborne will be the first to speak in our new chapel.

After request from the Steps to Life Chapel, Elder Mike Thompson decided to accept ordination today along with Elder Bob Trefz and Elder John Osborne. Because it was too late to add his picture and life history to the program, his life history is given below.

Michael John Thompson

Michael John Thompson was born in York, England on July 21, 1947. He comes from a non-Adventist family and was educated in the British school system. He became a Seventh-day in 1969 after forsaking plans to pursue a career in Rock music and encountering great opposition as a result. Under God's guidance he was led into nursing school in 1970 and finally graduated with a British R.M. degree in 1974.

It was during this time that he met and married his wife, Helen, who was a student nurse. Later in 1974, Mike entered Newbold College, England, in order to train for the ministry. Before completing his course he accepted God's call into self-supporting work in 1978 and worked as a medical missionary at Wildwood Sanitarium, and other institutions, including a short period of mission service in Belize, Central America. In November of 1987 God reaffirmed his call for Mike to enter the field of pastoral evangelism. As a result Mike attended Hartland College and completed his ministerial studies in 1990. He has since served as pastor and Bible worker at Steps to Life ministries. Mike and Helen have two daughters: Rachel (18) and Debbie (15).

Steps to Life Camp Meeting

Sabbath, June 13, 1992

Sabbath School

Song Service	Gwen Reeves
Theme Song	Gwen Reeves
Announcements	Ron Reeves
Mission Story	Teresa Kendall
Opening Prayer	Steve Curry
Special Music	Judy Albright
Sermon	Gwen Reeves
Closing Prayer	Gwen Reeves

Praise Service *

Worship Service

Announcements	Ron Reeves
Prelude	
Elders enter	
Invocation	Elder Mike Thompson
Doxology	
Opening Song	
Scripture	Diane Osborne
Prayer	Les Balsinger
Special Music	Dana Acavado
Children's Story	Teresa Kendall
Offering	Ron Reeves
Sermon	Dr. John Grosboll
Special Song	Ralph Henderson & John Osborne
Benediction	Dr. John Grosboll

* The congregation is to remain seated after the closing prayer for Sabbath School.

Robert Joseph Trefz



Robert Joseph Trefz was born July 26, 1949. He grew up in a devoted, Seventh-day Adventist home with godly parents. Most of his formal education took place in Adventist schools. He graduated from Adair Union College in 1973, after which he served at Solusi College as a Bible teacher. Upon returning to the states he attended the Seminary at Andrews University where he married his wife, Barbara Joan, who was just graduating from the nursing program. Bob completed his M.Div. training and went on to complete his doctoral classwork for his M.Th. degree. As he was beginning his thesis he returned to the field to teach college Bible classes. For several years he headed a theology department as well as serving for two years as acting academic dean. As he began lecturing and writing on religious liberty subjects, many began urging him to begin editing a religious liberty paper. In the fall of 1990, Freedom's Ring, a paper devoted to liberty of conscience and the triumph of the three angels' messages, was born. Bob directs Biblical Studies Institute and is also pastoring a very active, home church in South Dakota. Bob and Barbara have three children: Luther (12), Christine (10), and Esther (7).

Ordination Service June 13, 1992

Opening Prayer	Ron Reeves
Special Music	Ralph Henderson
Sermon	Dr. Ralph Larson
Ordination	Dr. Ralph Larson
Special Music	Ralph Henderson
Charge	Dr. John Grosboll
Closing Prayer	Pastor David Kang

"As His representatives among men,
Christ does not choose angels who have never
fallen, but human beings, men of like
passions with those they seek to save. Christ
took upon Himself humanity, that
He might reach humanity, Divinity needed
humanity; for it required both the divine
and the human to bring salvation to the world."
— Desire of Ages, 296

John Wesley Osborne, Jr.



John Wesley Osborne Jr. was born into a Seventh-day Adventist home on November 16, 1951. All of his formal education took place in Adventist schools. While in his second and third years of ministerial training at La Sierra College, he interned under Elders Jim Wolter and Ron Spear. After meeting and marrying his wife Dianne in 1974, they spent five years in retail business. John officially began his work in the gospel ministry in 1979, with a call from the Inter-America Division to be the program director and singing evangelist for the Kenneth Cox Evangelistic Association. In August of 1980, John received a call from the Florida Conference to pastor the Arcadia SDA church. In 1983 he was transferred to the Naples / Bonita Springs district. While there he put his evangelistic series, Prophecy Countdown, on a local television station in Ft. Myers. December 31, 1984 was John's last day as a conference pastor, and on January 1, 1985, he started an independent ministry. Since that time John has served as the founder / speaker of Prophecy Countdown, Inc. an international television ministry supported by SDA laymen worldwide. He also serves as senior Pastor of the 350 member Rolling Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church in Eustis, Florida. John and Dianne have one child, Johnny (John Wesley Osborne III), who is 15.

JUN 25 1992

From the G.C. President

June 23, 1992

Robert S. Folkenberg

1. Independents "ordain?": There are certain distinctive characteristics which identify religious bodies. Among these are: (a) an identified set of beliefs, (b) a distinct authority system, (c) independent financial management, (d) publications communicating distinctive beliefs, (e) baptizing new adherents, and (f) ordaining their own clergy. In spite of statements to the contrary, it has been apparent for some time that certain "independent ministries" (not to be confused with many **supportive** ministries) were in fact moving toward establishing their own separate religious organization(s). The characteristics mentioned above are all now evident. I find it painful to consider and even more distressing to admit, but the move toward an identity separate from the Seventh-day Adventist Church has become even more apparent. Sabbath, June 13, Ralph Larson, who is closely affiliated with *Hope International*, and an author for *Our Firm Foundation*, conducted an ordination service for John Osborne, Robert Trefz and Michael Thompson. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has established a careful process for the calling, ordination and credentialing of its ministers. The Church organization and process were not involved in any way in the June 13 ordination and thus these men are not ordained Seventh-day Adventist ministers.

2. ESD President: Elder M P Kulakov, president of the Euro-Asia Division, announced to the ESD Executive Committee his intention to retire later this year. Elder Kulakov has wanted to dedicate his time to work on a new translation of the Russian Bible and shared this desire with the past and present GC administration. He will continue to serve as president until his replacement is elected by the '92 Annual Council and is in place. He will then dedicate himself to this vital, urgently-needed project.

3. Bulgarian Evangelism: May 3 membership of the Bulgarian Union increased 10% from 4,000 to 4,500 from the five evangelistic crusades conducted during the first half of 1992! Six more efforts are planned for the remainder of the year, three by evangelists from Germany and three from North America. The Union has bought 17 homes, with contributions from members in other divisions, for use as churches and are planning to build six more, yet they are still desperate for 15 more houses of worship.

4. Mike Stevenson update: Mike is recovering rapidly from his second (June 9) surgery in which surgeons excised a large portion of his brain tumor. He has been accepted by George Washington University hospital into the "Breaky" Radiation therapy program in which radiation pellets are implanted in the brain, activated, and removed after a determined period of time. This procedure could be initiated in the next few weeks. Please continue to remember Mike and his family in your prayers.

5. Yugoslavia update: The Yugoslavia Union was recently renamed the South-East European Union. *Bosnia-Herzegovina*: 11 members survived in the church basement during the current siege of Sarajevo. The war damaged our city-center church and our conference headquarters. Muslim forces took our ADRA van for "military purposes" with the promise to return it after the war is over. Though three other churches have been damaged, including one in the ancient city of Mostar, there are no reports of lost lives.

Croatia: The Croatia-Slovenia Conference reports 15 churches war-damaged and 50 homes of SDA families destroyed or badly damaged. 13 Seventh-day Adventists have been reported killed and several more missing. June 17 the TED Executive Committee approved a request to temporarily attach the Croatia-Slovenian Conference directly to the TED rather than to the Union.

6. Middle-East Evangelism: I just received a report from an Islamic, middle-eastern country that 48 people were baptized. Last week training began for 12 young people to help them establish 6 churches in unentered areas. The first event in a targeted area was a Five-Day Plan to stop smoking which 200 people attended.

7. Flood disaster: At least 28 people lost their lives and about 250,000 had to be evacuated in parts of Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil as the Paraguay, Paraná and Iguazú rivers overflowed, inundating hundreds of villages. People here, normally living at a subsistence level, now exist under intolerable conditions, many having lost both homes and livelihood. ADRA distributed 2 tons of food and 10,000 pieces of clothing. US\$600,000 worth of medicines, provided by ADRA/Intl. were airlifted free by Argentine Airlines.

Hope International
Box 940
Eatonville, WA 98328
(206) 832-6602

SEP 3 1992

August 10, 1992

Robert Dale, Vice President
North American Division
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904

Dear Brother Dale,

It is with great sorrow that I am forced to write regarding misinformation that is spreading all over the world concerning the reported involvement of Hope International, *Our Firm Foundation* magazine, and Ron Spear with the ordination which took place at Steps to Life camp meeting. Please allow me to set the record straight.

Both Colin Standish and myself were to be speakers at the Steps to Life camp meeting in Wichita, Kansas, June 9-14. A few days before we were to go we were informed that an ordination would be taking place. Three men were to be ordained to the ministry. Both Dr. Standish and I earnestly counseled against it, and both of us communicated clearly that we would not be present if there was to be an ordination. Because Steps to Life felt that it definitely must take place, we did not attend the camp meeting.

We at Hope International believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has a prophetic destiny. Also, we believe God has enough power to keep anyone from sin who is willing to be made willing. This same power is able to purify His last-day remnant church, the Seventh-day Adventist Church. There will not be another. The church militant, defective as it may be now, will ere long become the church triumphant before the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Hope International and *Our Firm Foundation*, along with its staff and editor Ron Spear, will continue to publish and preach the everlasting gospel and straight testimony. We will not compromise the commission which the Lord has given us. We have supported and will continue to support the organization and its leaders in every area where to do so does not compromise our God-given commission.

We are not interested in debating the issue of ordination with anyone. Nor do we question the sincerity of those who took part in this ordination. But our understanding of what the church is has led us to conclude that this type of service is not within the scope of responsibility which God has placed upon us and our ministry here at Hope International. Beginning with the August edition, *Our Firm Foundation* will clearly state what our position on the church is.

It is our sincere prayer that the recent ordinations will not take our focus away from the great message God has entrusted to this church to be given at this crisis hour.

Sincerely,



Ron Spear
Editor for *Our Firm Foundation*

From the G.C. President

AUG 26 1992

August 24, 1992

Robert S. Folkenberg

1. "FTP" frequency: In case you're wondering: "From the G.C. President" (FTP) is not sent out on a regularly scheduled basis. It goes out only when I have something worth saying and have a few moments to put my thoughts on paper.

2. Second independent "ordination:" On August 8, Ralph Larson, accompanied by other independent (as opposed to "supportive") leaders, ordained Kenny Shelton during a campmeeting conducted near Santa Rosa, California. Do not confuse Kenny Shelton with the Danny Shelton of *Three Angels Broadcasting Network* (3ABN) whose ministry has consistently demonstrated loyalty to the Church, its message, and mission.

Demonstrating further disregard for conference constituent authority that same weekend, the Larson group baptized or "rebaptized," 37 individuals, some of whom had been dropped from church membership by their respective congregations. A reminder: baptizing new members, ordaining clergy, establishing separate systems of financial accountability and authority are a few of the identifying marks of a separate denomination, as suggested by Ellen White.

"When anyone is drawing apart from the organized body of God's commandment-keeping people, when he begins to pronounce judgment against them, then you may know that God is not leading him." 3 *Selected Messages* 18.

"We cannot now step off the foundation that God has established. We cannot enter into any new organization; for this would mean apostasy from the truth." 2 *Selected Messages* 390.

For your information: In response to the "FTP" (6/23) report of the first "independent" ordination June 13, Hartland Institute notified me that "neither Hope (International) nor Hartland were in attendance at the campmeeting where the ordination took place" and withdrew from attending when they became aware of the ordination. Hartland's letters did not comment on the matter of unauthorized baptisms, handling tithe, or other marks of membership authority.

3. ADRA active in Somalia: Prolonged drought and civil war threaten to wipe out as many as

1.5 million Somalis by starvation, according to the United Nations. A third of those victims are children. In June ADRA airlifted a supply of medicines to Somalia, but a clan of machine-gun armed men, waiting at the airport, stole the supplies as soon as the plane landed. Fortunately, none of the ADRA staff members was injured in the attack. ADRA is expanding operations by shipping clothing and shelter. ADRA Germany is working on a proposal to feed 4,500 (mainly children) for 3 months in a refugee camp near Mogadishu. For the last 2 years ADRA Canada has, in cooperation with several Somalian relief agencies, provided assistance totaling US\$24,000.

4. IAD exceeds expectations: As of June 30, 73,474 new members have been added to the church by baptism. This represents 73% of the '92 baptismal goal and an increase of 7,000 over the same period in '91. To God be the glory!

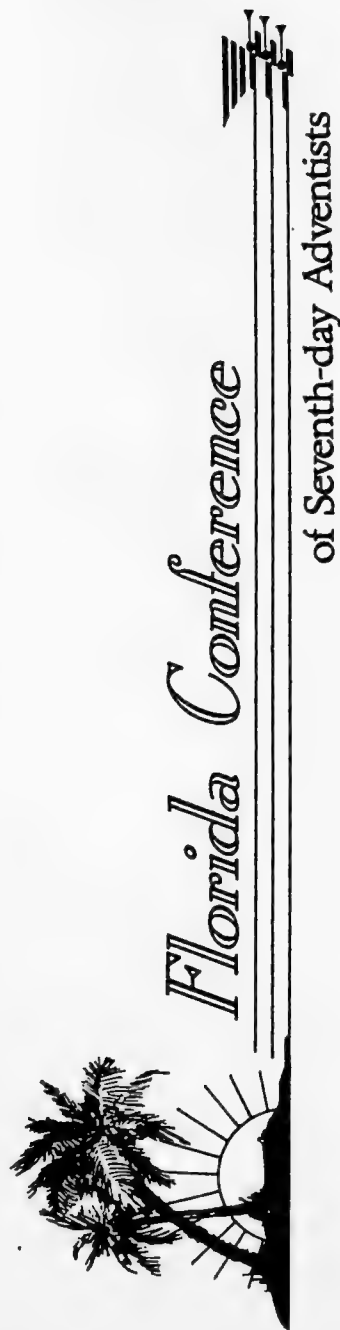
5. Global Mission, Crete: Crete, the largest Greek Island with a population of over 500,000, where Paul visited and Titus lived for some time to organize early Christian churches, is home to only 2 Seventh-day Adventists. The Greek Mission, with the help of the TED, is conducting a special summer project on the Island of Crete involving youth volunteers from Europe in a variety of activities to help share the Adventist message. Plans call for a pastor to move to the island before the youth program begins and then remain for 3-5 years working with a literature evangelist. They will conduct Bible seminars and health-related programs in the main towns of Heraklion, Hania, and Rethimno.

6. Adventist Frontier Service, India: Under the banner of Global Mission last year "AFS" sent young volunteers out two-by-two (many from Spicer College) to penetrate 100 selected unentered people groups with the gospel. By the end of July, 39 of the 100 targeted areas have congregations established with over 750 newly baptized believers. Never before in the history of India have the leaders and members rallied as unitedly in this, the greatest experiment ever undertaken in India, in the art of gospel witness.

#

APPENDIX XIII

ACTIONS VOTED TO DISFELLOWSHIP



June 2, 1992

Robert L. Dale, Vice President
North American Division
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

Dear Elder Dale:

Enclosed as per your request is a copy of the actions concerning John Osborne and family. You requested the action documenting that John Osborne and family were disfellowshipped, reference action number 91-98 for disfellowship of John Osborne. Reference action #91-99 regarding the request of Dianne and Johnny (son) to be dropped from the Florida Conference Church. This request was honored. Dianne and Johnny were upon verification, as per their request, dropped from the Florida Conference Church effective September 29, 1991.

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,


Lewis Hendershot
Vice President/Secretary

dlw

Enclosure

Florida Conference Executive Committee Minutes - September 29, 1991

91-98

JOHN OSBORNE

VOTED to DROP John Osborne from membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church for apostasy. It was noted that we received a facsimile from John, signed by John Osborne, Dianne Osborne, and Johnny Osborne, requesting that their names be dropped from the Florida Conference Church and stating that they were in the process of joining another Seventh-day Adventist Church.

91-99

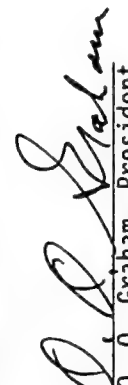
DIANNE AND JOHNNY OSBORNE

VOTED to ACCEPT the request of Dianne Osborne and Johnny Osborne to be dropped from the Florida Conference Church subject to verification by the conference officers that this is indeed their wish.

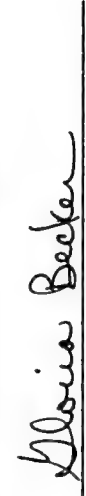
91-100

PROPHECY COUNTDOWN/JOHN OSBORNE

VOTED that the conference administration PREPARE appropriate defense literature regarding the Prophecy Countdown and John Osborne matters.


O. O. Graham, President


Lewis Hendershot, Secretary


Gloria Becker, Recording Secretary

SDA CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING

July 20, 1992

Pastor Shafter opened the meeting with prayer.

Present: Doug Houk, Bert Denke, Shirley Krebs, Lillian Binder, Len Winter, Barb Winter, Sandy Kambour, Ken Kambour, Jack Dyer, Margaret Dyer, Helen A. Brodie, Don Brodie, Doug Carr, Bill Frazee, Mary Frazee, Hugh A. Barlow, Edianne Erickson, Rocky Schlager, Kimberly Carr, Misty Binstock, Sherry Mesowski, Judy Marcoe, Pierre Marcoe, Cindy Schlager, Karen Shafter, Pastor Shafter, Ken Lester, and Alpha Lester.

Treasurer's report: Motion to accept Treasurer's report. Carried.

Clerk's Report: Motion to accept Clerk's report. Carried.

A recommendation from the Board that Hugh Barlow, a member in good standing, qualifies as a candidate for financial aid to attend Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska.

After discussion, Pierre Marcoe suggested we announce this to the congregation, should there be others who may qualify.

If no one applies after one week, the recommendation for Hugh Barlow will be forwarded to Union College.

Announcements: Family Camp will be held August 7th through the 9th. Everyone is urged to get their reservations in if they plan to stay at camp overnight.

A booth has been reserved at the Central States Fair August 7th through August 15th.

August 11th - the Herald's will present a concert at the church.

August 15th - Seminar by Pastor Ron and Nancy Rocky on "Family Life".

August 22nd - Seminar and cooking school presented by Dr. and Mrs. Melvin Beltz.

Question regarding the land at Crooked Oak Canyon Estates - The Conference has approved including the land they own bordering the land owned by the SDA Church-Rapid City in the auction sale.

Don Brodie has offered to donate the material needed to seal the cracks in the parking lot. Someone else will be needed to do the labor.

Motion: Transfer to SDA Church Rapid City - Alice and Wilfred Levadney from Roseville SDA Church, Roseville, California; Bob, Peggy, Robbie and Michael Boyd from the Ogden SDA Church, Ogden, Utah. Carried.

Motion: Transfer out of the SDA Church Rapid City to the Custer SDA Church, Custer, SD - David, Helen, Norman, Dennis, and Marjorie Susens. Carried.

Transfer out of the SDA Church Rapid City to the Laurelwood SDA Church, Gaston, Oregon - Gary S and Marirose Force. Carried.

Walter Green has requested his name be removed from the membership of the SDA Church. A motion to honor his request carried.

Motion was made that we extend another 3 months to the censure of Bob Trefz. Motion second. Vote by secret ballot - 18 No, 8 Yes. Sandy Kambour requested to go on record as voting Yes.

Motion was made to disfellowship Bob Trefz from the SDA Church, Rapid City, South Dakota. Vote by secret ballot. 8 No, 18 Yes. Sandy Kambour, Len Winter, Barb Winter and Sherry Mesowski go on record voting No.

Meeting closed with prayer by Doug Carr.

Respectively submitted,

Alpha Lester D.S.
Alpha S. Lester, Clerk
SDA Church, Rapid City

Rapid City Seventh-day Adventist Church

4703 South Canyon Rd.
Rapid City, S.D. 57702
343-7369

July 2, 1992

Hermosa, S.D.

57744

Dear Bob Treftz:

As you are well aware your church membership was placed under censure during the last church business meeting. Your membership status will be review again during the July church business meeting. It causes us great sadness to have to take these actions. You are a very intelligent and gifted individual and I appeal to you to turn from the course of action that you now follow. The fruit of your ministry has been that of individuals leaving God's church. God has given this church the unique mission of calling people out of Babylon and preparing them for the second coming of our Lord. Granted there are individuals in the church needing to be called to repentance and God is working to accomplish this, we can not reform the church from the outside. " Although there are evils existing in the church, and will be until the end of the world, the church in these last days is to be the light of the world that is polluted and demoralized by sin. The church, enfeebled and defective, needing to be reprovved, warned and counseled, is the only object upon earth upon which Christ bestows His supreme regard." Remnant pp. 33-34.

Bob, I am more than willing to meet with you any time and discuss the differences that you have with our church. I am willing to begin a process of reconciliation. I appeal to you to accept my invitation. We can sit down with the Word of God as our guide and resolve our differences.

Sincerely ,

Pasta Dennis Shafter

Pastor Dennis Shafter



Rapid City Seventh-day Adventist Church

4703 South Canyon Rd.
Rapid City, S.D. 57702
343-7369

August, 1992
Hermosa, S.D.
57744

Dear Bob Treftz:

On July 20, at a duly called Church Business Meeting the decision was made to remove your membership from the Rapid City Seventh -day Adventist church for the following reasons:

1. Adhering to or taking part in a divisive or disloyal movement or organization.
2. Persistent refusal to recognize properly constituted church authority or to submit to the order and discipline of the church.

In regards to the letter you wrote me there has never been any discussion on your part or anyone else of sexual misconduct.

We do want you to know that we continue to pray that there can be reconciliation between you and our church so that one day there will be eternal fellowship together in the kingdom of God.

Sincerely



Pastor Dennis Shafter

GENERAL
CONFERENCE
OF THE
SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST
CHURCH

NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

August 26, 1992

Dear

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the action of the Rapid City, South Dakota Church removing Bob Trefz from membership. Both the actions of Mr Trefz prior to his removal from membership and of the church in removing his membership were unknown to us here in the General Conference office prior to these events.

Some have attempted to indicate a conspiracy on the part of church leadership at the General Conference/North American Division level to instigate or support this action. Such is pure fantasy. The General Conference does not involve itself in membership matters which in Adventist Church procedure and policy is rightly reserved for and invested in the local congregation.

It is obvious that higher levels of church operation and governance cannot possibly know enough of the local situation to make decisions on membership issues. We would not presume to do so. It is quite amazing, however, that individuals scattered all over the division presume to judge the actions of the Rapid City congregation on the basis of one-sided and warped information received at great distance from the actual events which led to the disfellowshipping.

A rather transparent and obvious letter writing campaign has begun regarding this issue. Unfortunately, many will be deluded by it--often eagerly and willingly. Please pray that God will deliver all in the community of the church from these strong delusions which would cause people to believe a lie, as we have been warned in scripture.

Very sincerely,

Gary B Patterson
Assistant to the President

a

Office of the President

12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600, Telephone (301) 680-6402, Fax (301) 680-6464

APPENDIX XIV

HOPE INTERNATIONAL BAPTISMS

Arkansas-Louisiana Conference

of Seventh-day Adventists

Post Office Box 31000
Shreveport, Louisiana 71130

October 3, 1991

Office of the President

Elder Don F. Gilbert
Treasurer
General Conference of SDA
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring MD 20904-6600

Dear Don:

Last spring while our conference evangelist was holding an evangelistic series in Hot Springs, Arkansas, Ron Spear and his group which included Ralph Larson, held a Camp Meeting in Hot Springs without making any contact at all with our office. Fortunately the majority of our church members in Hot Springs supported the evangelistic meeting instead of going out to the Hope International camp meeting.

I am told that a carload of our members from New Orleans went up to the Hope International camp meeting in Hot Springs. Our pastor and Bible Instructor from New Orleans First Church had been studying with a lady who apparently was taken by this group of members to that camp meeting. When she came back from Hot Springs, she informed our pastor that she had been baptized by Ralph Larson along with six or seven others and that they were told to go to the Adventist Church and tell them to take them in on Profession of Faith. The pastor said this lady was not ready to be baptized because he had been working with her on some of her problems. He called the conference office quite upset that she had been rushed into baptism as he felt he was moving along with her at a good pace and was helping her get her living habits in line with the church.

I contacted Elder Bob Dale and counselled with him on this problem as I certainly consider that this conduct by Hope International is not working with the conference or with the churches. It is a bit frustrating when someone comes back saying they had been baptized by Hope International Church and want to be taken into our church on Profession of Faith when the pastor and Bible Instructor had already been studying with the lady for several months.

Elder Don Gilbert

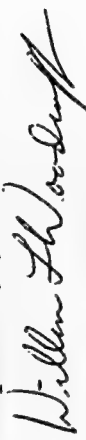
- 2 -

October 3, 1991

If Hope International considers themselves a part of the church, I would certainly think they should work with the conference leaders in scheduling camp meetings and preparing people for baptism.

I would appreciate anything you brethren can do to help correct this type of procedure on the part of Ron Spear and Hope International.

Respectfully yours,



William L. Woodruff
President

b cc: Elder Robert Folkenberg
Elder Bob Dale

APPENDIX XV

TITHE

Supplement to the *Adventist Review*

Seventh-day Adventists follow the Biblical injunction to return one-tenth of their income, the tithe, to the Lord. Recently

Ellen G.
White's
counsel
and
practice

Tithe

questions have arisen concerning Ellen White's statements and actions with regard to the tithe.

Some, charging the Church with apostasy, have even claimed Ellen White's support for diverting tithe from established channels.

This paper distills many hours of research and study. It attempts to set out fairly and accurately Ellen White's position. The paper is developed in two parts: Part I—Answers to the questions most frequently raised; Part II—An examination of the key Ellen White statements.

By Roger W. Coon, Ph.D.
Associate Secretary,
Ellen G. White Estate

Part I

Questions about Tithe and Offerings

Since the time Abraham first paid “tithe” to Melchizedek—king of Salem and priest of the Most High God (Gen. 14:18)—believers throughout the ages have earnestly inquired about how to figure one’s tithe, when and where to return it to God, and what God wants the tithe to be used for.

These are legitimate questions, and every new generation must seek the answers for itself. The Old Testament gives clear instruction for the return and use of the tithe. The New Testament does not elaborate further, except to endorse the necessity of tithe-paying. Thus, the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s position on tithe has been based upon the principles laid down in the Old Testament, and their application to a Christian church with ministers, not priests.

Specifically, Adventists have endeavored to follow the counsels of Ellen G. White, as she has applied the Biblical teachings to our own day. Thus it is only fitting that questions be asked regarding Mrs. White’s understanding of the tithe. But first, let us review the Biblical perspective on tithe.

Tithe was one-tenth of one’s increase (Mal. 3:7-10; Lev. 27:30,32) returned to God as a sign of one’s allegiance to, and partnership with, God. God was the acknowledged owner, humans the stewards of His property. In Malachi’s day the tithes were paid to the priests. Tithes were stored in a “storehouse,” a collection of rooms at the Temple in Jerusalem, since tithes were often paid in agricultural produce. The tithes were the payment, or inheritance, for the tribe of Levi—those who ministered before God at the Temple. God said, “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house” (Mal. 3:10, NIV).

The tithe spoken of was neither an “offering,” nor “second tithe” (an additional one-tenth set aside by some

Israelites as an offering), but a full one-tenth of one’s increase given to the priests.

Q *Since we have no Levitical priests today, what does Ellen White say tithe is to be used for?*

A In Ellen White’s amplification of the biblical counsel, she says “The tithe is sacred, reserved by God for Himself. It is to be brought into His treasury to be used to sustain the gospel laborers in their work.”¹

Mrs. White understood appropriate “gospel workers” to be supported by tithe funds to include:

- Ministers and Bible instructors²
- Bible teachers in our educational institutions³
- Needy mission fields (in North America and abroad)⁴
- Minister-physicians⁵
- Retired gospel workers⁶

She indicated that some religious and humanitarian activities which, “though good in themselves, are not the object to which the Lord has said that the tithe should be applied”.⁷ These included:

- Care of the poor, the sick, and the aged⁸
- Education of worthy and needy students⁹
- Operating and other expenses of schools¹⁰
- Wages of literature evangelists¹¹
- Expenses of a local church¹²
- Church buildings or buildings for institutional needs, (such as schools, hospitals, and publishing houses).¹³
- Missionary work in new places¹⁴
- Charity and hospitality¹⁵
- Other benevolent purposes.¹⁶

These are to be met from freewill offerings given in addition to the tithe. Mrs. White sometimes used the expression “second tithe” as a synonym for these offerings. But she never confused the “second tithe” with the regular tithe.

Q *Does it really make any difference where I send my tithes and offerings? Is there more than one “storehouse” today?*

A Malachi enjoined upon us the sending of the “whole tithe” to the “storehouse”; but he did *not* say that all of the offerings should also go there. God has left it with us to

Ellen G. White and the Tithe

determine the “how much” and “where” and “what” of our freewill offerings. Not so with the tithe.

Mrs. White generally used the word “means” as a synonym for offerings. And these offerings—or “means”—may be put into church channels, to be spent upon worthy projects not directly funded by the church. Writing to her son Edson she spoke of such offerings: “The Lord has not specified any regular channel through which means should pass.”¹⁷

And, again, she spoke about offerings—not tithe—when in 1908 she wrote “To Those Bearing Responsibilities in Washington and Other Centers”: “The Lord works through various agencies. If there are those who desire to step into new fields and take up new lines of work, encourage them to do so . . .” and she added “Do not worry lest some means shall go direct to those who are trying to do missionary work in a quiet and effective way. All the means is not to be handled by one agency or organization.”¹⁸

But the tithe? That was another matter. In a message read before the delegates at the San Jose, California, State Conference in January, 1907, Mrs. White used the word “storehouse” once—obviously so that her hearers would understand the context of her remarks concerning the tithe. But she used the word “treasury” six times (and the expression “treasure house of God” once additionally) in these remarks.¹⁹

A contextual examination of this message, and others similar in content, show that for Mrs. White, “treasury” or “treasure house” were synonymous with the denominational treasury—whether at the local church, local conference, union conference, division, or General Conference level.

Q *Should I pay my tithe to a church if I believe it is in apostasy?*

A There is a fine line—but significant distinction—between “a church in apostasy” and “apostasy in the church.” No person acquainted with the Seventh-day Adventist Church would deny that throughout our history some apostasy has existed in our ranks—and does even today.

God has left it with us to determine the “how much” and “where” and “what” of our freewill offerings. Not so with the tithe.

Mrs. White speaks of a final, cataclysmic “shaking” coming to the church at the end in which many²⁰ will be shaken out. It may well be that the “final” shaking has already begun in some places.

But to suggest, as some critics do, that the “church is in apostasy” today is as irresponsible as it is highly judgmental.

What is apostasy? Most religious dictionaries define it as departure from pure doctrine or practice. But *who* defines that doctrine or practice?

Some critics today contend that “the church is in apostasy” because it does not advocate their particular view of the human nature of Christ, with its resulting brand of theology.

There are at least three views on the nature of Christ current in Adventist circles: (1) that at the incarnation Christ took the nature of Adam *before* Adam’s fall; (2) that He took the nature of Adam *after* the fall; and (3) that He took a nature that in certain respects was like Adam’s before the fall, but in other respects was like Adam’s after the fall.

These critics believe the second of these options, and declare that any other position is “apostasy.” What they do *not* say is that a large number of Adventist ministers, Bible teachers, and church members, of equal learning and commitment, today take the third rather than the second of these positions.²¹ Why? Because of (1) certain acknowledged ambiguities in both Scripture and Mrs. White’s writings on the human nature of Jesus, and (2) some very clear warnings in the Spirit of Prophecy against any attempt at totally humanizing Christ.²² However, these Adventist ministers, teachers, and members just as verily believe that Christ’s example demonstrates that a life of victory over sin is possible.

Nor do critics make clear that because of these ambiguities and cautions of Mrs. White, the church has never officially endorsed *any* of these three views. Doctrinal positions can be established only by the world church in General Conference Session. Not even the General Conference Executive Committee in its regular sessions, and certainly not individual members or an “independent ministry,” can define church doctrine. Since the church has never defined this particular theological question, how can it be said that anyone in the church

Ellen G. White and the Tithe

(much less the church itself) is in apostasy due to the positions taken on the human nature of Christ?

The church as a body is *not* in apostasy (though there is apostasy in the church). It is not only proper, but an obligation laid down by Scripture and Ellen White that as church members, we should pay our tithes (if not our offerings) into the treasury of the church.

Q *Do I incur personal guilt before God if I financially support a church whose ministers might be teaching error, misappropriating church funds, or doing other wrong things?*

A Jesus praised a poor widow for making a gift to a religious organization that was on the verge of heaven's rejection (Luke 21:2-4).

Mrs. White taught that (1) even if church monies were misapplied, the donor would still receive God's blessing²³; (2) when things are wrong at leadership levels, we have a duty to speak out "plainly and openly, in the right spirit, and to the proper ones"²⁴; and (3) we are *still* to pay our tithes into the conference treasury:

"Some have been dissatisfied and have said, 'I will not [sic] longer pay my tithe . . . into His treasury . . . for I have no confidence in the way things are managed at the heart of the work. *But will you rob God* because you think the management of the work is not right? Make your complaint . . . Send in your petitions for things to be adjusted and set in order; *but do not withdraw* from the work of God, *and prove unfaithful*, because others are not doing right.'"²⁵

In 1890 Mrs. White wrote further concerning this wrong practice: "You who have been withholding your means from the cause of God, read the book of Malachi, and see what is spoken there in regard to tithes and offerings. Cannot you see that *it is not best under any circumstances to withhold your tithes and offerings* because you are not in harmony with everything your brethren do? The tithes and offerings are not the property of any man, but are to be used in doing a certain work for God. *Unworthy ministers may receive some of the means thus raised; but dare any one, because of this, withhold from the treasury and brave the curse of God?* I dare not. I pay my tithes gladly and freely . . .

"If the Conference business is not managed according to the order of the Lord, that is the sin of the erring ones. The Lord will not hold you responsible for it, if you do what

you can to correct the evil. *But do not commit sin yourselves by withholding from God His own property.*"²⁶

From the context it is clear that Mrs. White considered the withholding of one's tithes and offerings *from the conference treasury* to be a sinful act, and not justified on the ground that because "unworthy ministers" might receive some of the funds thus deposited. God does "not hold you responsible" for the sins of church leadership, "if you do what you can to correct the evil."

It may be helpful to remember that there always have been doctrinal differences within our church. During the period to which some refer as "Historic Adventism," Uriah Smith believed that Christ was God, but that He was not eternal, and that the Father was first "in point of time"; Drs. John Harvey Kellogg and E. J. Waggoner held pantheistic ideas; and church leaders differed on the meaning of the "daily" in Daniel 8 and the "king of the North" in Daniel 11. Yet Mrs. White *never* urged members to withhold their tithes from the denominational treasury because some of our responsible leaders were "unworthy."

Q *Because Ellen White did not always send her tithe through the local church and conference channels, am I at liberty to follow her example?*

A Some independent ministries, in an effort to justify their receiving and/or soliciting tithe from Adventist members, have defended their practice on the basis that, at the turn of the century, Mrs. White used some of her tithe to assist black and white ministers—largely in the Southern states, who were destitute, and many of whom were retired.

One has to realize that in those days there was neither a denominational retirement program (formerly called "the sustentation plan") nor yet a state pension for the retired (in the States called Social Security). The church's retirement plan was yet six years in the future (and Social Security was yet 30 years away) when Mrs. White wrote a letter in 1905 to George F. Watson, president of the Colorado Conference, concerning her occasional use of some of her tithe for special Church needs.

This short, seven-paragraph letter today may be read in its entirety in Arthur L. White's biography of his grandmother²⁷—I mention this because some people in reproducing the letter leave out such sentences as "I

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would not advise that anyone should make a practice of gathering up tithe money.”

What is the background? President Watson had just discovered that a representative of the Southern Missionary Society had come to his field soliciting funds for the very needy missionary enterprise. The representative had received some \$400 from one church, including some tithe. In his indignation, Watson was about to make public this prominent breach of denominational protocol.

On January 22, 1905, Mrs. White wrote to urge Watson, urging him to “keep cool” about the matter. She mentioned that from time to time she had used some of her own tithe as well as the tithe of a few others to help certain individuals pointed out to her by God who were in desperate financial straits.

In this letter and in an article published the next year²⁸—Mrs. White made these points about her practice:

1. She was directly instructed by God to help certain destitute black and white Adventist ministers.

2. She was instructed by God that she should first notify the conference officials of the need, and urge them to help. If and when they defaulted, she was to move in directly with immediate aid.

3. The situation was unique, and she emphasized this by such expressions as “my special work” and “special cases.”

4. Mrs. White did not want this special project to be taken as an example or precedent, since God had specifically instructed her alone to do it.

5. The money was “not withheld from the Lord’s treasury” in that these tithes were given to Adventist Church ministers—either currently employed by the Southern Missionary Society (and thus bearers of General Conference ministerial credentials²⁹) or retired and holding the “honorary” credentials that retired SDA ministers on the retirement plan today hold.

6. She pointedly remarked, “I would not advise that any one should make a practice of gathering up tithe money.”

Of those who today justify their acceptance and/or solicitation of tithe from fellow SDA church members, we might well inquire:

1. Did *God* directly appoint them to the work of gathering up, or accepting these tithes?

2. Does the situation that prompted her emergency program at the turn of the century exist today (or is it nullified by church and state pensions for retired workers)?

3. If the situation is the same today as in 1905, did they first contact the conference officials (as was Mrs. White’s consistent practice), before going ahead on their own to rectify the situation?

4. Are they spending the tithe monies they collect for the same purpose as did Ellen White—primarily retired Adventist ministers on the doorstep of poverty?

5. Are the funds they collect going to a recognized agency of the SDA Church organization and/or to needy retired workers who were in the employ of the church prior to retirement?

Again, there is *no record* that any tithe money from Ellen White went to any “independent” agency or person outside those officially endorsed or sponsored by the Adventist Church.

Q *I’ve heard it said that other women who joined Mrs. White in her “tithe project” for the Southern ministers didn’t send their tithe through Mrs. White but sent it directly to needy ministers, and that she must have approved of such actions. Is this so?*

A No. Alberto Timm, director of the Ellen G. White Research Center at Brazil College, recently prepared a major doctoral research paper in his study program at Andrews University on Mrs. White’s special uses of tithe. In it he points out:

“Although we have no basis to assume that all private tithe sent to the Southern field was sent under Ellen White’s direct advice, it is quite evident that she preferred to accept their tithe, give a receipt, and send it where she felt it was most needed, rather than allowing individuals to apply it as they felt they should . . .”³⁰

Indeed, in the “Watson Letter” Mrs. White frankly states that (1) “I have taken the money,” (2) kept a special receipt book which she used in acknowledging and processing these funds, and then (3) got back to the donors to tell them “how it was appropriated.”

There always have been doctrinal differences. Yet, Mrs. White never urged members to withhold tithes because some leaders were unworthy.

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Q *I recently heard that there is a document in the White Estate archives, reportedly written by W. C. White, A. G. Daniells, and W. W. Prescott, which seems to indicate that Mrs. White's position was that SDA tithe need not always be transmitted through regular church channels. Is this true?*

A In the document file DF 213 there is a three-page typewritten memorandum that (1) bears no date, and (2) contains no signatures, which does suggest that maybe this was her position. But the file *also* contains a statement from White Estate archivist Tim L. Poirier which sounds a cautionary note concerning this anonymous document:

"Before unwarranted conclusions are drawn, it should be remembered that the memorandum represents an outline of a *suggested* approach to [answer] Dr. Stewart's misuse of Ellen White's letter to Elder Watson. No Ellen White statements are presented to support the planned response. In actuality, one cannot 'show from her writings' what the memorandum seems to suggest. The Watson letter is the only Ellen White statement from which they formed their conclusion, and a careful reading of the letter does not suggest as loose a policy as the planned response outlines. In fairness to the committee, it should be emphasized that the memorandum, being notes presumably prepared for its own members, is probably not a carefully worded, complete statement of the members' conclusions."³¹

But, even so, for the sake of argument, let us assume that White, Daniells, and Prescott were the authors. Would their readily acknowledged close proximity to the prophet guarantee an infallible interpretation of her position on the proper disposition of the tithe? No. An incident from our early denominational history supports this.

Upon at least two occasions early in her prophetic ministry (Nov. 1846, and again in 1849), Mrs. White was given visions of inhabited "other worlds." In the earlier one James White and Joseph Bates were among the witnesses.

As she described one planet after another, Bates—a retired sea captain who was an expert on celestial navigation—became greatly excited, and offered his personal identification of each of the heavenly bodies as Mrs. White described them in turn: Jupiter, Saturn, and Uranus.

Subsequently, James White,³² and Adventism's first historian, J. N. Loughborough,³³ went into print with the vision story, using Bates' identification of the respective

planets viewed. (Ellen herself neither then nor later attempted any such identification, as apologist F. D. Nichol points out.)³⁴

Today we know that Bates identified the wrong planets, and James White and Loughborough perpetuated this misapplication in print. All three were very close to Mrs. White, and all three misinterpreted an important facet of this vision! Closeness to a prophet does not guarantee correctness.

W. C. White, A. G. Daniells, and W. W. Prescott *may* have been the authors of this anonymous memorandum in the White Estate files. But the only safe course to follow, as regards Mrs. White's position on the tithe question, is to let her speak for herself.

And it is an undeniable fact that Mrs. White *never counseled* anyone to place his or her tithes anywhere except in the denominational "treasury."

Q *I recently read that the SDA church leadership is out to resolve its "tithe-problem" by "crushing" and "destroying" independent ministries that are doing a lot of good. Is this so?*

A The answer is no. Here's why:

1. The General Conference believes in and supports those "independent ministries" that seek to cooperate with the church rather than to attack the church and work at cross purposes with it.

The very existence of the "Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries" (ASI) as an official service agency of the North American Division of the church³⁵ is itself proof of the high value that the denomination places upon legitimate, responsible "self-supporting work."

2. Ellen White believed in loyal self-supporting institutional work, too. Indeed, the only official position she ever allowed herself to accept in our denomination was membership on the board of self-supporting Nashville Agricultural and Normal Institute (later known as Madison College) in Tennessee, from 1904 to 1914.³⁶

Her brother-in-law, Stephen Belden, was a self-supporting missionary in the South Pacific. And her son, Edson, spent much of his life in self-supporting work.

3. The editors of the *Adventist Review*, the general paper of the Adventist Church, believe in responsible self-supporting work, and feature projects and institutions from time to time. In December, 1989, they ran a

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four-part series of articles pointing out how to identify worthy "independent ministries."³⁷

Wayne Dull, president of Eden Valley Institute (a self-supporting medical-missionary training center in Loveland, Colorado), characterized loyal self-supporting organizations—another term to describe "independent ministries"—in this way:

1. They accept the challenge to minister as self-supporting missionaries.
2. They are willing to sacrifice.
3. They unite their efforts with the church.
4. They help carry God's last message to the world.
5. They recognize and respect the church.
6. They will be well-balanced in principles and lifestyle.
7. They will bring all the tithes into God's appointed "storehouse."³⁸

In conclusion, wouldn't it be tragic as well as ironic if, in the end, we should belatedly discover that those who now take the position that the church has apostatized were *themselves* guilty of apostasy by teaching others that God's "storehouse" today is the treasury of any place where Sabbath-keeping religious work for Christ is being performed, and that they could withhold their tithes from the denominational treasury and place them in "independent ministries" with impunity?

We do know that when Christ returns, "many will say, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?'"

And we already know His reply: in mournful tones—when it is forever too late—"Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:22, 23).

Indeed, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven . . ." (Matt. 5:19).

God is particular!

End Notes for Part I

¹ Ellen G. White Manuscript 83, 1904, cited in *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 1, p. 137.

² *Evangelism*, p. 492.

³ *Testimonies*, Vol. 6, p. 215.

⁴ *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 1, p. 192.

⁵ *Medical Ministry*, p. 245.

⁶ *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 1, p. 189.

⁷ *Testimonies*, Vol. 9, p. 248.

⁸ *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 3, p. 218; *Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 103.

⁹ *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 1, pp. 193, 194.

¹⁰ *Testimonies*, Vol. 9, pp. 248-50.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 103; *Testimonies*, Vol. 9, p. 248; *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 1, p. 191.

¹³ *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 1, pp. 185, 191. For a more complete discussion, see Robert W. Olson, "Ellen G. White Comments on the Use of Tithe Funds," in "The History and Use of the Tithe," unpublished manuscript, Ellen G. White Estate, rev. ed., Feb., 1990, pp. 17-25.

¹⁴ Ellen G. White Letter 103, April 7, 1905; cited in *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 7, p. 139.

¹⁵ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 530.

¹⁶ *Education*, p. 44.

¹⁷ Ellen G. White Letter 136, Aug. 14, 1898. A variant is cited in *Spalding-Magan Collection*, p. 498.

¹⁸ Ellen G. White Letter 32, Jan. 6, 1908, p. 6; cited in *Spalding-Magan Collection*, p. 421.

¹⁹ *Testimonies*, Vol. 9, pp. 245-51.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. 5, p. 136.

²¹ See, for example, Robert W. Olson, *The Humanity of Christ*, Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1989, 32 pp.

²² See, for example, certain Ellen White statements in *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, 1128, 1129, 1131.

²³ *Testimonies*, Vol. 2, pp. 518, 519.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 9, p. 249.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, emphasis supplied.

²⁶ *Special Testimonies*, Series A., no. 1, p. 27; emphasis supplied.

²⁷ Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Early Elmshaven Years, 1900-1905*, pp. 395, 396.

²⁸ *Selected Messages*, Vol. 1, p. 33, from *Review & Herald*, July 26, 1906.

²⁹ "Southern Missionary Society," *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, rev. ed., 1976, p. 1396.

³⁰ Alberto Ronald Timm, "An Analysis of Four Statements of Ellen G. White on Special Uses of Tithe," unpublished graduate research paper, CHIS 673, S.D.A. Theological Seminary, Andrews University, April, 1991, p. 14 (the document has 20 pp.).

³¹ [Timothy L. Poirier], "A Note Regarding the Document 'A Memorandum of Plans Agreed Upon in Dealing With The Blue Book,'" unpublished document, Ellen G. White Estate Document File 213, p. 1.

³² James White (ed.), *A Word to the Little Flock*, p. 22.

³³ J. N. Loughborough, *Rise and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*, p. 126, and its sequel, *The Great Second Advent Movement*, pp. 258, 259.

³⁴ Francis D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, Chapter 7, pp. 91-101.

³⁵ *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, 1991, p. 21.

³⁶ "Madison Institutions," *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1976 ed., p. 828; Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Early Elmshaven Years, 1900-1905*, p. 327.

³⁷ Joe Engelkemier, "Independent Ministries: Should We Support Them?" *Adventist Review*, Dec. 7, 1989, pp. 10-12; "Independent Ministries: Should They Receive Tithe?," *ibid.*, pp. 11-13; "Independent Ministries: Should They Cooperate With Church Leaders?," *ibid.*, pp. 16, 17; "Independent Ministries: The Use and Misuse of the 'Straight Testimony'," *ibid.*, pp. 13-15.

³⁸ Wayne Dull, "Self Supporting Work," *ibid.*, Sept. 18, 1991, p. 11.

Part 2

Ellen G. White's Statements Examined

I. Withheld or Misappropriated Tithe

At a camp meeting in a southwestern conference, a woman said to me, "I feel that some of my tithe money has been used by church leaders in a manner which I totally disapprove—helping fund legal action against an Adventist who reportedly misused the denominational name." And lest I misjudge the depth of her feelings, she then remarked: "You go tell those church leaders where you came from that if they do this once more, they'll never see another nickel of my tithe!"

Another church member, in a midwestern State, telephoned me to complain that his conference administration had allocated more than \$20,000 of tithe money to help set up a new church company whose experimental style of worship was repugnant to him. He concluded, with considerable vehemence, "I'm finished sending my tithe to those boys" at the conference office. Other similar scenarios might be cited from around the world.

Problems in Ellen White's Day

More than one has wondered out loud about what Ellen White might say on these issues were she alive today. Fortunately, we need not wonder long, for, as the adage goes, "The more things change, the more they stay the same."

In Mrs. White's day the church faced three problems with regard to both tithe and offerings:

- Some leaders at church headquarters diverted funds entrusted to their care. Instead of allocating the funds to the purpose designated by the donor, the money was used for other church projects.

- On occasion some church members withheld payment of the tithe, either in whole or in part, using it to cover personal emergencies at home.

- Sometimes church members decided that they—not conference officials—should choose the projects upon which their tithe should be expended.

Mrs. White wrote against all three of these irregularities. And what she said in her day needs to be said again in our day.

As we survey Mrs. White's various essays on the subject, we see her making three particular points, always in her typically forthright manner.

1. God Blesses the Donor

In 1870, Ellen White told the leaders of the church, concerning funds that had been misapplied: "The means thus dedicated has not always been appropriated as the self-sacrificing donors designed. Covetous, selfish men, having no spirit of self-denial or self-sacrifice themselves, have handled unfaithfully means thus brought into the treasury."¹

In spite of this malfeasance, Mrs. White went on to encourage the donors with these words: "Those self-sacrificing, consecrated ones who render back to God the things that are His, as He requires of them, will be rewarded according to their works. Even though the means thus consecrated be misapplied so that it does not accomplish the object which the donor had in view—the glory of God and the salvation of souls—those who made the sacrifice in sincerity of soul, with an eye single to the glory of God, will not lose their reward."²

What an encouragement those words must have been to church members whose money did not always go as the donor had intended! Fortunately, we today are much less likely to be confronted by a similar situation because clear, unequivocal denominational policies require funds to go as specified by the donor, and church auditors—at all levels—monitor such procedures carefully and continuously.

Does that mean, then, that if my funds are misapplied, I should not complain, because I'm going to receive my blessing anyway? No, not according to Ellen White.

2. Speak to the Proper Ones

Mrs. White spelled out the duty church members have when they feel that their tithes and offerings are being improperly used. She counselled: "Some have been dissatisfied and have said: 'I will not longer pay my tithe for I have no confidence in the way things are

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managed at the heart of the work.' But will you rob God because you think the management of the work is not right?

"Make your complaint, plainly and openly, in the right spirit, to the proper ones. Send in your petitions for things to be adjusted and set in order; but do not withdraw from the work of God, and prove unfaithful, because others are not doing right."³

Mrs. White did not counsel silence at the price of expediency. After telling the church member to "make your complaint," she went on to specify *how* such complaints should be made.

(a) "*Plainly and openly.*" No innuendos; no dark hints of mysterious wrongs too horrible to be uttered in the light of day. None of this "If you knew what I know," etc.

(b) "*In the right spirit.*" Criticism can be constructive or destructive. While Ellen White never sanctioned the latter; she applauded and recommended the former. Often the key factor is not *what* is done, but *how* it is done.

(c) "*To the proper ones.*" In Matthew 18 Jesus specifies that when we have a grievance against a brother in the church, we should go to him alone in seeking to ameliorate the situation. If that initiative fails, we should go again, with one or two other Christians as witnesses. If that also fails, then—and only then—"Tell it unto the church" (v. 17).

Calling this Christ's "recipe,"⁴ Mrs. White says we are to follow this principle "in all cases and under all circumstances."⁵ And, in the process, we are "not to make it a matter of comment and criticism among ourselves; nor even after it is told to the church, are we at liberty to repeat it to others."⁶

A certain "Brother D," in 1885, created a problem in his church by clandestinely telling church members that "the leaders in this work are designing, dishonest men, engaged in deceiving the people." Mrs. White wrote that Brother D's activity did not bear the signet of heaven. She counselled a much better way. She said,

"He has not conformed to the Bible rule and conferred with the leading brethren. . . . Let him come upon an equality with his brethren; if he has difficulties with them in regard to their course of action, let him show wherein their sin lies."⁷

3. The Tithe Not to be Withheld or Diverted

But, we may ask, are there no circumstances under which individual church members may feel free to dispense their tithe as they please? The answer: Ellen White never even considered such an option.

In Mrs. White's day some Seventh-day Adventists either withheld their tithes and offerings altogether, or diverted their tithe by applying it to projects of their own choosing. This was done because the conference business, in the eyes of the member, was being improperly administered, and unworthy ministers were being paid from the tithe.

In an article entitled, "Existing Evils and Their Remedy," Mrs. White wrote, in 1890: "You who have been withholding your means from the cause of God, read the book of Malachi, and see what is spoken there in regard to tithes and offerings. Cannot you see that it is not best under any circumstances to withhold your tithes and offerings because you are not in harmony with everything your brethren do? Unworthy ministers may receive some of the means thus raised; but dare any one, because of this, withhold from the treasury, and brave the curse of God? I dare not. . . .

"If the Conference business is not managed according to the order of the Lord, that is the sin of the erring ones. The Lord will not hold you responsible for it, if you do what you can to correct the evil. But do not commit sin yourselves by withholding from God His own

property."⁸

Nearly two decades later Ellen White's convictions were still the same. She wrote, in 1909: "Let none feel at liberty to retain their tithe, to use according to their own judgment. They are not to use it for themselves in an emergency, nor to apply it as they see fit, even in what they may regard as the Lord's work. . . .

"A very plain, definite message has been given to me for our people. I am bidden to tell them that they are making a mistake in applying the tithe to various objects which, though good in themselves, are not the object to which the Lord has said that the tithe should be applied."⁹

Those self-sacrificing ones who render back to God the things that are His, as He requires of them, will be rewarded according to their works.

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II. The Disposition of Tithes and Offerings

Proper and Improper Usages of Tithe Funds

What are these usages which, "though good in themselves," were not to be supported from the tithe? According to Ellen White, they include

- The care of the poor, sick, and aged.¹⁰
- The education of worthy and needy students.¹¹
- Operating expenses of schools.¹²
- Salaries and expenses of literature evangelists.¹³
- The expenses of a local church.¹⁴
- Buildings for congregational worship or institutional needs, such as schools, hospitals, and publishing houses.¹⁵

On the positive side, Ellen White wrote: "The tithe is sacred, reserved by God for Himself. It is to be brought into His treasury to be used to sustain the gospel laborers in their work."¹⁶

Leaving no doubt in anyone's mind as to what she meant, Ellen White named the functions for which a conference committee might regularly appropriate tithe funds. These include

- Salaries and expenses of ministers and Bible instructors.¹⁷
- Salaries and expenses of Bible teachers in our various educational institutions.¹⁸
- Salaries and expenses of minister-physicians.¹⁹
- Retirement benefits for gospel workers.²⁰
- Needy mission fields, in North America and abroad.²¹

At a time before the church's worldwide work was as well established as it is today, Mrs. White also indicated that in exceptionally dire emergency situations the conference might use tithe funds "to secure the humblest place of worship."²² Further, she approved the appropriation of some tithe funds to assist the self-supporting enterprise being established by Professors Sutherland and Magan at Madison, Tennessee.²³ These exceptions were just that—exceptions. They were not the rule. Her general counsel is stated so unambiguously that none need misunderstand: "A great mistake is made when the tithe is drawn from the object for which it is to be used—the support of the ministers."²⁴

Who Are Ministers?

If the tithe is to be used essentially for ministerial salaries and expenses, what constitutes a "minister"? An

independent publishing ministry in a North American conference is known to have designated six of its employees as "ministers." None of these "ministers" is recognized as such by the local conference. Yet all of them (three field representatives, two workers who operate a cassette ministry, and the appointment secretary) are paid from tithes which, though the publishing enterprise does not actively solicit, it nevertheless knowingly and willingly accepts.

The employees of this publishing ministry do not criticize the church. They publish tracts by the million and send their literature without charge to developing countries.

Are these six persons actually ministers, qualified to be paid by tithe money?

In the broadest sense, all church members should be ministers. Mrs. White wrote: "You may say, 'I am not a minister, and therefore cannot preach the truth.' You may not be a minister in the generally-accepted sense of the word; you may never be called to stand in the desk. Nevertheless, you can be a minister for Christ. If you will have your eyes opened to see the opportunities that present themselves for speaking a word to this soul and to that, God will speak through you to lead them to Christ."²⁵

So we all should be God's ministers. However, to suggest that Ellen White would approve of paying from the tithe all "ministers for Christ" although they are not "ministers in the generally-accepted sense of the word" is to give the word "minister" a meaning she never intended.

For Ellen White the ministers in "the generally-accepted sense of the word" were men appointed by the conference as licensed ministers or ordained ministers. As noted above, she also included women Bible instructors who served under the aegis of the conference as worthy of tithe support.

Literature evangelists were specifically excluded by Mrs. White as eligible for tithe support. This is in spite of the fact that they are either commissioned or credentialed by conference executive committee action, and often give more Bible studies in a week than does the local pastor. If literature evangelists were pointedly excluded from receiving the tithe, much less can we make a legitimate case for paying tithe to self-appointed ministers in a lay-operated publishing enterprise.

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In the publishing houses of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, not one employee, other than ordained-minister editors, is paid from tithe funds. It matters not whether he be a worker in a factory, a field representative, or even the president of the publishing house himself.

The Storehouse

Now, what about the “storehouse”? Malachi quotes God as instructing His people to bring all the tithes into the “storehouse” (Mal. 3:10).

A fair reading of Ellen White’s statements leads unquestionably to the conclusion that, in her mind, the church treasury was the storehouse of Malachi 3. She used the words “treasury” and “storehouse” as synonyms when she wrote, “If all the tithes were brought into the storehouse, God’s treasury would not be empty.”²⁶ Concerning the church treasury, she stated: “Many presidents of state conferences do not attend to that which is their work—to see that the elders and deacons of the churches do their work in the churches, by seeing that a faithful tithe is brought into the treasury.”²⁷

Again, she declared: “If our churches will take their stand upon the Lord’s word and be faithful, paying their tithe into His treasury, more laborers will be encouraged to take up ministerial work.”²⁸

Seventh-day Adventists hold as a fundamental belief that they are the remnant church referred to in Revelation 12:17. They are the church militant, not the church triumphant. The church militant is composed of both wheat and tares, but nevertheless it is the visible organization God is using to proclaim the three angels’ messages to the ends of the earth.

There is only one “storehouse” and that must be the organized church itself. This includes each local and union conference, as well as the General Conference. These are the three levels of the church where properly elected committees determine where tithe funds can best be spent.

It is essential that all branches of the church work together closely if we are to accomplish our mission. Mrs. White declares: “Some have advanced the thought that, as we near the close of time, every child of God will act independently of any religious organization. But I have been instructed by the Lord that in this work there is no such thing as every man’s being independent. The stars of

heaven are all under law, each influencing the other to do the will of God, yielding their common obedience to the law that controls their action. And, in order that the Lord’s work may advance healthfully and solidly, His people must draw together.”²⁹

We are not drawing together when we compete with one another for the tithe. Such a practice can only lead to a fracturing of our unity, and ultimately, a completely divided house.

**In order that
the Lord’s
work may
advance
healthfully
and solidly,
His people
must draw
together.**

Offerings

Next, what about offerings? God accused His people anciently of robbing Him in two financial categories—“tithes” and “offerings” (Mal. 3:8). Significantly, He instructs His people to bring all the tithes into the storehouse, but not necessarily all the offerings. In the handling of our offerings God allows us a measure of discretion not permitted in the handling of the tithe. He permits us to decide how much we will give, and how and where we will place our gifts.

The tithe is specified as 10 percent of our “increase” (Lev. 27:32; Deut. 14:22), which all are obliged to pay. However, when it comes to freewill offerings, each person is to give “as he is able,” and according to the “blessing of the Lord thy God which He hath given thee.” (Deut. 16:17).

Our offerings may be given for any one or more of numerous important activities, such as operation expenses of the local church and church school, local conference special projects, the world budget, our various educational institutions, radio and TV ministries, disaster and famine relief, and community service. These offerings may either be channeled through the local church treasurer, or given directly to the selected cause or agency.

When Ellen White wrote her son Edson that “the Lord has not specified any regular channel through which means should pass,” she was talking about offerings, not tithe, as the immediately preceding paragraph in her letter makes clear: “There are those who have means and will give, some small sums and some large sums . . . direct to your destitute portion of the vineyard” in the South.³⁰

Note, similarly, the counsel in her letter to the General Conference leadership in 1908, when the Madison enterprise was still in its early stages: “The Lord works through various agencies. If there are those who desire to step into

*Ellen G. White and the Tithe**Ellen G. White and the Tithe*

new fields and take up new lines of labor, encourage them to do so. . . . Do not worry lest some means shall go direct to those who are trying to do missionary work in a quiet and effective way. All the means is not to be handled by one agency or organization."³¹

The restrictions placed on the tithe are not seen here. Offerings may be given directly to a designated missionary project, while tithes are returned to the Lord through the church organization.

A similar thought is expressed in Mrs. White's letter to General Conference President O. A. Olsen: "God does not lay upon you the burden of asking the Conference, or any council of men, whether you shall use your means as you see fit to advance the work of God."³²

W. C. White later clarified the meaning of his mother's statement to O. A. Olsen by indicating that the phrase "your means" might more accurately have been rendered "means entrusted to your care."³³

III. THE WATSON LETTER

We now turn to the "Watson letter", for in this letter we learn that Ellen White occasionally gave some of her tithe directly to a designated project or individual.

"During the greater part of the time since my connection with Mother's business in 1881, a full tithe has been paid on her salary to church or conference treasurer."³⁴ So wrote W. C. White, Ellen White's son, late in her lifetime. However, there were some exceptions to this rule. At times Mrs. White gave a portion of her tithe funds directly to Adventist ministers who were in dire financial straits. Why did she do this, when her consistent counsel to others was to return their tithe through the church treasury?

Ellen White's Special Work

The entire picture is laid out fully by Arthur L. White, Ellen White's grandson, in his biography of the prophet.³⁵ The basic facts are these: Part of Mrs. White's divine commission dealt with meeting the needs of elderly ministers no longer able to work and draw a salary. She states: "I was charged not to neglect or pass by those who were being wronged. . . . If I see those in positions of trust neglecting aged ministers, I am to present the matter to those whose duty it is to care for them. Ministers who have

faithfully done their work are not to be forgotten or neglected when they have become feeble in health."³⁶

Those words were written in 1906, five years before the church instituted a pension plan for denominational retirees, and long before the United States government made provision for a pension for retired Americans with the Social Security Act of 1935.

Today, church workers, not only in the United States but in many other countries as well, can live in retirement with at least a measure of comfort from the combined income of their church and government pensions. But before 1911, when a minister retired, his income ceased. Some then became destitute. And there were some who were destitute even before they retired.

When acute cases of impoverished workers were brought to Mrs. White's attention, she first contacted conference officials. Often this was sufficient, and aid was forthcoming. But occasionally there were problems, particularly in the southern States, where operating funds were always in short supply, and sometimes almost nonexistent. In such instances Mrs. White stepped in, using a portion of her own tithe and, on occasion, tithe funds placed with her by other church members as well.

For many years Ellen White carried an extraordinary burden for the work in the South. Her son, J. Edson White, shared this burden. With the blessing of the General Conference administration, Edson founded the Southern Missionary Society in 1895. This Society fostered work largely among African-Americans in the southern States. Mrs. White at times made private appeals for church members to aid this struggling, needy, and worthy work.

Money That Did Not Reach its Destination

During the first six months of 1896 the International Sabbath School Association raised \$10,878—an enormous sum in those days—for the "Southern work."³⁷ Embarrassingly, these funds never reached their destination. The money was at first held in trust by the Pacific Press. It appears that the Pacific Press decided to keep the money permanently in lieu of a similar amount owed the Press by the General Conference. The Pacific Press management apparently expected the General Conference, in turn, to appropriate an equal sum to the Southern Missionary Society. But this was not done, since the General Conference coffers were either empty or nearly so.

Ellen G. White and the Tithe

This unfortunate incident took place 18 years before the creation of the General Conference Auditing Service in 1914. Today all church funds, and their keepers, are closely and regularly monitored at all levels to reduce the incidence of mismanagement to the lowest possible degree.

The Colorado Incident

In 1904, as conditions in the South were growing more acute, W. O. Palmer, a field representative of the Southern Missionary Society, went to Colorado to solicit funds among the churches. One congregation contributed about \$400, some of which was tithe money. The whole procedure was admittedly irregular. The Colorado Conference saw the act as wrong and censurable. And its president was prepared to deal sternly with the hapless, errant intruder in his vineyard.

On January 22, 1905, Ellen White, then visiting in Mountain View, California, learned of the details and wrote what has now become known as the "Watson letter."

This letter is used today by several independent ministries to justify their solicitation and acceptance of tithe funds from their fellow church members. Extracts are sometimes published, but not always has the entire document been reproduced—for reasons which quickly become obvious.

For example, an edited version of the letter has been circulated by one independent ministry with a significant deletion: "I would not advise that anyone should make a practice of gathering up tithe money."

The letter was a short one by Ellen White standards—just seven paragraphs. We reproduce it here in its entirety:

The Watson Letter

My brother, I wish to say to you, Be careful how you move. You are not moving wisely. The least you have to speak about the tithe that has been appropriated to the most needy and the most discouraging field in the world, the more sensible you will be.

It has been presented to me for years that my tithe was to be appropriated by myself to aid the white and colored ministers who were neglected and did not receive sufficient, properly to support their families. When my attention was called to aged ministers,

white or black, it was my special duty to investigate into their necessities and supply their needs. This was to be my special work, and I have done this in a number of cases. No man should give notoriety to the fact that in special cases the tithe is used in that way.

In regard to the colored work in the South, that field has been and is still being robbed of the means that should come to the workers in that field. If there have been cases where our sisters have appropriated their

tithe to the support of the ministers working for the colored people in the South, let every man, if he is wise, hold his peace.

I have myself appropriated my tithe to the most needy cases brought to my notice. I have been instructed to do this; and as the money is not withheld from the Lord's treasury, it is not a matter that should be commented upon, for it will necessitate my making known these matters, which I do not desire to do, because it is not best.

Some cases have been kept before me for years, and I have supplied their needs from the tithe, as God instructed me to do. And if any person shall say to me, Sister White, will you appropriate my tithe where you know it is most needed, I shall say, Yes, I will; and

I have done so. I commend those sisters who have placed their tithe where it is most needed to help do a work that is being left undone, and if this matter is given publicity, it will create a knowledge which would better be left as it is. I do not care to give publicity to this work which the Lord has appointed me to do, and others to do.

I send this matter to you so that you shall not make a mistake. Circumstances alter cases. I would not advise that anyone should make a practice of gathering up tithe money. But for years there have now and then been persons who have lost confidence in the appropriation of the tithe who have placed their tithe in my hands, and said that if I did not take it they would themselves appropriate it to the families of the most needy ministers they could find. I have taken the money, given a receipt for it, and told them how it was appropriated.

I write this to you so that you shall keep cool and not become stirred up and give publicity to this matter, lest many more shall follow their example.³⁸

This letter is used today by several independent ministries to justify their solicitation and acceptance of tithe funds.

Ellen G. White and the Tithe

Let us here draw some conclusions from this unusual incident in our denominational history:

1. Ellen White was directly instructed by God to aid certain poverty-stricken ministers, white and black.

2. Ellen White's first task was to notify the Conference of the existing needs. Only if they did not respond did she then step into the breach with emergency assistance.

3. The money thus disbursed was used for living expenses of destitute workers—not for operating expenses of institutions, the publishing of literature, etc.

4. The pre-1911 financial situation does not exist today in the United States or in many other parts of the world. Pension plans are available now that did not exist when she wrote this letter.

5. In every paragraph of her letter there is at least one sentence in which she explicitly urged Elder Watson to keep quiet about the situation. This was *her* special work, not the special work of others. If everyone followed her example, the financial structure of the church would be substantially damaged.

6. Independent ministries who circulate this letter for their own personal purposes, in order to justify solicitation and/or acceptance of tithe funds from their fellow SDA church members, are doing exactly what Ellen White told Elder Watson not to do.

7. The money was "not withheld from the Lord's treasury" in that it was being applied to denominationally-recognized ministers.

Ellen White's Support of Recognized Causes Only

As far as extant records indicate, all tithe funds which passed through Mrs. White's hands about the turn of the century were delivered to a recognized agency of the Seventh-day Adventist Church—in this case the Southern Missionary Society—or to workers who were sponsored or endorsed by the church leadership. None of Ellen White's tithe is known to have gone to an independent agency or to a self-supporting worker not under the direct umbrella of the church.

While the Southern Missionary Society was, for all

practical purposes, a self-supporting organization, yet it was founded and continued to function "under the instruction of, and bearing the credentials of, the General Conference."³⁹ In giving a portion of her tithe to the Southern Missionary Society Ellen White was giving to an enterprise officially approved by the General Conference.

The Society's Work and Struggles

The greater part of the Society's work was the starting and maintenance of mission schools and the publishing of literature especially suited for the Southern field. However, the Society also carried forward other lines of evangelism among both Caucasians and African-Americans, and supported several white and black ministers. It received only a token appropriation from church funds.⁴⁰

In the reorganization of the denomination at the General Conference Session of 1901, the Southern Union Conference was created, and the Southern Missionary Society became a branch of the Southern Union. Because the Southern Union itself was not self-supporting at its birth, it was unable to provide any significant support for the Society. The adoption of the latter meant little more than "additional moral support and cooperation."⁴¹

The Money From Colorado

Elder William C. White, son of Ellen White and younger brother of the founder of the Southern Missionary Society, later recalled concerning the tithe funds sent to the Society from Colorado: "The money was placed in the treasury of the Southern Missionary Society and was paid out in a regular and economical way to approved laborers who were engaged in regular denominational work."⁴²

When the tithe issue in Colorado continued to be vigorously agitated by Elder Watson, General Conference President Arthur G. Daniells wrote to Edson to ask for his side of the story. In an eight-page reply, Edson mentioned several interesting facts concerning the operation of the Southern Missionary Society, which was by now an integral part of the church: "The white laborers for the white people in the South are paid from the tithe,

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Ellen G. White and the Tithe

but for several years the Southern Missionary Society has supported from two to five ordained ministers among the colored people, and this support has come from donations received, but the conferences have not allowed the tithe to go to their support. . . .

"Some people have placed their tithe in mother's hands and she has forwarded [it] to our Society, promptly, to help meet the payroll of the ministers. Recently three sisters in Colorado have sent their tithe to pay the colored ministers in the South. Considerable disturbance was created in regard to this by the President of the Colorado Conference. . . . Bro. Palmer never asked an individual to pay tithe, and he certainly did not ask the church to pay its tithe. . . .

"We keep a separate account of the small sums of tithes that come to us in this way and apply them entirely to pay the ministers working for the colored people."⁴³

Edson expressed concern on his part as to whether tithes ought to be coming to his organization, but since the sisterhood of conferences in the Southern Union refused to help—whether from their own financial distress or from various prejudices—he decided to accept it when offered. He continued: "I had many times refused tithes that had been offered to me, and I felt I needed to know my ground. I knew that the money would be used to pay ministers where their pay was refused us from the tithe from all other places, but whether we had a right to take it was a question."⁴⁴

The Tithe Distribution System

The worldwide work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is jeopardized today when the tithe distribution system is tampered with in any way. Each conference collects the tithe from its constituent churches, keeps a specified amount, established by policy, to meet local

ministerial expense needs, and sends the rest on to the union and the General Conference. Thus, the needs in other less affluent fields around the world can be met.

If Seventh-day Adventist church members divert their tithes, even to tithe-worthy projects at home or abroad, the basic reservoir to fund our world work will be endangered. It was this very situation that Ellen White had in mind when, in 1890, she admonished our church members and leaders: "Brethren, do not be unfaithful in your lot. Stand in your place. Do not, by your neglect of duty, increase our financial difficulties."⁴⁵

In 1911, the same year that the denomination instituted its retirement plan, Ellen White was approached as to her willingness to continue directly receiving tithe from church members. The pressure was now off, the original need was now virtually non-existent. Her reply is as helpful now as it was instructive then.

She wrote: "You ask if I will accept tithe from you and use it in the cause of God where most needed. In reply I will say that I shall not refuse to do this, but at the same time I will tell you that there is a better way. It is better to put confidence in the ministers of the conference where you live, and in the officers of the church where you worship. Draw nigh to your brethren."⁴⁶

In the spirit of the apostle Paul, who wrote the Corinthian church, "Yet show I unto you a more excellent way" (1 Cor. 12:31), Ellen

White urged her fellow church members to follow the plan that best meets the total world-wide needs of the church, to minimize shortfalls and their tragic consequences. Let us follow what Ellen White called "a better way." Soon the church militant will give way to the church triumphant. In that day all who are now faithful will surely be glad that they have followed the whole counsel of the Lord.*

**She wrote,
"It is better
to put confidence in
the ministers of the
conference where you
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worship."**

*End notes on back page.

Ellen G. White and the Tithe

End Notes for Part II

- ¹ *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 2, p. 518.
- ² *Ibid.*, pp. 518, 519.
- ³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 9, p. 249.
- ⁴ *The Upward Look*, p. 106.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 136.
- ⁶ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 441.
- ⁷ *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, pp. 289, 290.
- ⁸ *Special Testimonies*, Series A, No. 1, p. 27.
- ⁹ *Testimonies*, Vol. 9, pp. 247, 248.
- ¹⁰ *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 3, p. 218; *Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 103.
- ¹¹ *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 1, pp. 193, 194.
- ¹² *Testimonies*, Vol. 9, pp. 248-250.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ *Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 103; *Testimonies*, Vol. 9, p. 248; *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 1, p. 191.
- ¹⁵ *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 1, pp. 185, 191.
- ¹⁶ *Testimonies*, Vol. 9, p. 249.
- ¹⁷ *Evangelism*, p. 492.
- ¹⁸ *Testimonies*, Vol. 6, p. 215.
- ¹⁹ *Medical Ministry*, p. 245.
- ²⁰ *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 1, p. 189.
- ²¹ *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 1, p. 192.
- ²² *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 1, p. 189.
- ²³ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 11, p. 25.
- ²⁴ *Testimonies*, Vol. 9, p. 249.
- ²⁵ *The Upward Look*, p. 247.
- ²⁶ *Pacific Union Recorder*, October 10, 1901.
- ²⁷ *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 305.
- ²⁸ *Testimonies*, Vol. 9, p. 249.
- ²⁹ *Testimonies*, Vol. 9, pp. 257, 258.
- ³⁰ Ellen G. White Letter 136, August 14, 1898; A variant is cited in the *Spalding-Magan Collection*, p. 498.
- ³¹ Ellen G. White Letter 32, January 6, 1908; cited in the *Spalding-Magan Collection*, p. 421.
- ³² Ellen G. White Letter 54, 1895, p. 19.
- ³³ See *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 1444, for a photocopy of W. C. White's interlineation on p. 20 of Letter 55, 1895.
- ³⁴ Quoted by Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Early Elmshaven Years, 1900-1905*, p. 393.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 389-397.
- ³⁶ *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 33.
- ³⁷ Ronald Graybill, *Mission to Black America*, pp. 107, 108.
- ³⁸ Quoted by Arthur L. White in *Ellen G. White: The Early Elmshaven Years, 1900-1905*, pp. 395, 396.
- ³⁹ "James Edson White," *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1976 ed., p. 1598; "Southern Missionary Society," *ibid.*, p. 1396.
- ⁴⁰ Arthur L. White, "Mrs. Ellen G. White and the Tithe," in "The History and Use of the Tithe," unpublished document, Ellen G. White Estate, revised February, 1990, p. 30.
- ⁴¹ "Southern Missionary Society," *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1976 ed., p. 1397.
- ⁴² Quoted by Arthur L. White in *Ellen G. White: The Early Elmshaven Years, 1900-1905*, p. 394.
- ⁴³ J. Edson White letter to Arthur G. Daniells, March 26, 1905.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁵ *Special Testimonies*, Series A, no. 1, pp. 27, 28.
- ⁴⁶ *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 1, p. 196.

For readers interested in further information, the Ellen G. White Estate offers a collection of papers, "The History and Use of the Tithe." Write: Ellen G. White Estate, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600. Enclose \$2.50 to cover costs of duplication and postage.





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AN OPEN LETTER TO RON SPEAR

Editor of Our Firm Foundation

Date: September 24, 1991

From: Elder Ed Reid, pastor, attorney, and newly elected Executive Secretary/Treasurer of ASI(Adventist/Laymen's Services and Industries).

Re: The article, "*The Tithe Problem—Who is Responsible?*", by Ralph Larson in Our Firm Foundation, September 1991, pp. 20-24.

Dear Brother Spear,

Over the past several years because of my responsibility as director of Stewardship for the Georgia Cumberland Conference I have had the opportunity to study extensively in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy to understand the principles of personal money management and general stewardship of the Christian believer. I have conducted seminars in numerous ministers meetings, campmeetings, schools and self-supporting institutions on this subject. I believe I have a good working knowledge of the divine counsel to us on this subject. Therefore, what I will share with you now is not my opinion of this subject but rather an educated understanding of the principles in regard to our stewardship. Because I feel that time is of the essence in regard to responding to this article I will just give you a general response now and will be happy to produce a more scholarly response later.

With this background I must tell you that I have just read with great consternation, surprise, and shock the above referenced article regarding the tithe problem in the S.D.A. Church. As editor of the publication you are ultimately responsible for its content. This article flies in the face of your published mission statement on page 3 of your publication where you state that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is "the Remnant Church of Bible Prophecy" and you "urge upon all the duty of supporting the S.D.A. Church in every way possible."

Based upon your editorial in the September, 1991 issue of Our Firm Foundation and many other recent editorials, one would get the impression that you do not love the Seventh-day Adventist Church and in fact you seem to find some satisfaction when mistakes or problems

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develop in the church.

Anyone possessed with only slight reasoning ability who reads the tithing article mentioned above would get the clear impression that:

1. The church has apostatized
2. The tithe is discretionary
3. The tithe can be split into various parts
4. Ellen White did not practice what she preached
5. Ellen White is our example
6. The tithe is to be used as a pawn to purge the church
7. Those who reprove the church should receive the tithe

However, none of the above are true. In fact, they are all very false and the presentation of this material to your readers as truth is extremely dangerous and divisive--dangerous to the person who would practice what you are recommending by implication and divisive within the church you claim to support. You are in a very questionable position and for your own soul's sake you should print a retraction of this article and share with your readers the real truth about tithing. Two verses of scripture came to mind when I read this article:

Proverbs, chapter 6, vss 12-19:

"These six things the Lord hates,
Yes, seven are an abomination to Him...
...(#7) one who sews discord among brethren."

"A worthless person, a wicked man,
walks with a perverse mouth...
...He points with his fingers;..
...He sows discord.
Therefore his calamity shall come suddenly;"

Matthew 5:19:

"Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but: whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

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As I have mentioned above, though I have read literally hundreds of statements from the Spirit of Prophecy on the subject of tithe, offerings and money management, I have never seen any statement that would support in any way the conclusions of the article by Brother Larson which you by your influence as editor have endorsed.

Brother Spear, I appeal to you, as a fellow Seventh-day Adventist Christian who is seeking victory in my life through the power of the indwelling Christ in preparation for His soon coming, please re-read the article you have published, see its subtle divisiveness and error, and do all in your power to correct the wrong information and impressions.

I will give you the benefit of being sincere in starting and maintaining your "special ministry" but I fear that this article if not corrected immediately will spell the death knell to your organization and you will soon join the ranks of Charles Wheeling and Desmond Ford on a frolic and banter of your own--far away from God's Remnant Church.

Please take the time to consider my reasons for believing that the above listed seven points (conclusions) from the article are erroneous:

FALSE IMPRESSION #1 - The Church has apostatized.

The real truth here brother Spear, as you well know, is that individuals, not "the Church" have apostatized. We have been told that near the end many will leave the church and thank God many will come in to take their places. I get the clear impression from my study that those who leave are the ones in error not those who stay with the ship. The church is going through, even with its denominational identity (see 9T). Those who leave it will be leaving the ark of safety. How can you ever do evangelism as a worker for God if there is no church to bring them into? How can you sell something you are always criticizing?

FALSE IMPRESSION #2 - The Tithe is discretionary.

Some may have received the impression over the years that because tithing is not a test of faith in the S.D.A. church that it is optional. Nothing could be farther from the truth! The part that is left to the discretion of men is the amount that constitutes an honest tithe, which by definition is the whole tithe to the right place. God does not appeal to our gratitude or our generosity in regard to the tithe, it is a matter of simple honesty (see Ed.). He does not ask our opinion as to what percent of our income is His tithe or where we feel it should go. It is plain in the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy that a tenth of our increase is to be returned to the storehouse.

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FALSE IMPRESSION #3 - The Tithe can be split into various parts.

Very basic Scripture and Spirit of Prophecy principles are violated here. Mal. 3:8 says plainly, "Bring all the tithes to the storehouse." Many modern versions say, "Bring the whole tithe to the storehouse."

We are also told, "Everyone is to be his own assessor and is left to give as he purposes in his heart. But there are those who are guilty of the same sin as Ananias and Sapphira, thinking that if they withhold a portion of what God claims in the tithing system the brethren will never know it. Thus thought the guilty couple whose example is given us as a warning." (4T, 469, see also 5T 150).

If only a portion of what one owes is being returned as stewards of God we are defrauding Him. Please notice the following: "To defraud God is the greatest crime of which man can be guilty; and yet this sin is deep and widespread."

From a legal perspective if I fail to hold up my end of the bargain (see your baptismal vow where you affirmed before God and those present that you believed that the S.D.A. church was the Remnant Church of Bible Prophecy and that you would faithfully support it with your tithe and offering) I have breached the contract and it becomes null and void. God lets us know how valuable stewardship is in the following passage:

"He who gave His only-begotten Son to die for you, has made a covenant with you. He gives you His blessings, and in return He requires you to bring Him your tithes and offerings." C.S. p. 75.

Remember the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant" are spoken to the servant who was faithful in the use of his money. (see 1T 197) and "There is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account." Heb. 4:13.

FALSE IMPRESSION #4 - Ellen White did not practice what she preached.

When you read widely in the writings of Ellen White you always get the strong and positive understanding that faithfulness in tithing was extremely important. (See major articles such as 9T 245-256). The article or publication supposedly authored W. White, Prescott and Daniels, referred to as the only evidence that the tithe could be used at one's discretion was not inspired material but in legal terms is only "dicta" and not "precedent". The reference was

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I dare not." (MS. 3, 1890).

The language used by sister White in 9T pp. 248-250 is very clear and powerful in this regard. For example:

"A very plain, definite message has been given to me for our people. I am bidden to tell them that they are making a mistake in applying the tithe to various objects which, though good in themselves, are not the object to which the Lord has said that the tithe should be applied. Those who make this use of the tithe are departing from the Lord's arrangement. God will judge for these things...."

"A great mistake is made when the tithe is drawn from the object for which it is to be used—the support of the ministers..."

"Some have been dissatisfied and have said: 'I will not longer pay my tithe, for I have no confidence in the way things are managed at the heart of the work.' But will you rob God because you think the management of the work is not right? Make your complaint, plainly and openly, in the right spirit, to the proper ones. Send in your petitions for things to be adjusted and set in order; but do not withdraw from the work of God, and prove unfaithful, because others are not doing right..."

"There should be an abundant supply in the Lord's treasury, and there would be if selfish hearts and hands had not withheld the tithes or made use of them to support other lines of work."

"God's reserved resources are to be used in no such haphazard way. The tithe is the Lord's, and those who meddle with it will be punished with the loss of their heavenly treasure unless they repent."

FALSE IMPRESSION #7 - Those who reprove the church should receive the tithe.

This really needs no comment in light of the above statements. However, one point should be noted and that is when Ellen White makes statements about ministers who should not be paid by the tithe because of their practice or belief she never suggests that individual members should not pay their tithe but rather that the offending minister should be dealt with by the conference.

IN CONCLUSION let me let me refer you to the chapter in 9T "An Appeal to Laymen" p. 125 and following. Let's show the world "That there is unity and strength among Seventh-day Adventists."

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Brother Spear, again I appeal to you to study this subject in context and recognize the damage you are doing by publishing material that is false and misleading.

In Christian love and concern,



Ed Reid

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certainly not inspired. When you use the words of Ellen White herself as in the letter to the President of the Colorado Conference (quoted in its entirety and distributed by every ABC in the country in EGW Biography, vol. 5 pp. 394-396) one easily sees that in every one of the seven paragraphs of that letter Ellen White states that her practice of occasionally sending some of her tithe directly to a needy denominational minister was done by her at the special direction of the Lord and in each paragraph she states that this should not be made known to others lest they seek to follow her example.

For example here are just two short quotes from this letter:

"This was to be my special work, and I have done this in a number of cases. No man should give notoriety to the fact that in special cases the tithe is used in this way." (Ibid. p. 395).

"I write this to you so that you shall keep cool and not become stirred up and give publicity to this matter, lest many more shall follow their example." (Ibid. p. 396).

It is certainly clear from this letter that Ellen White did not encourage anyone to use his tithe according to his personal discretion. Her use of the tithe in the manner discussed above was the exception and not the rule and was followed only when the Lord showed her a special need.

FALSE IMPRESSION #5 - Ellen White is our Example.

Over and over in the Spirit of Prophecy we are pointed to our Savior as our example. Remember Jesus is the one who paid the temple tax, and commended the widow who gave all she had to support a church that later crucified Him.

Even if she were our example, that example would be one of solid support of the organized church.

FALSE IMPRESSION #6 - The tithe is to be used as a pawn to purge the church.

The is just no evidence in either the Bible or the writings of Ellen White that would support or even imply in any way that we should stop our tithing if we see mistakes or problems in the church.

Ellen White plainly stated, *"Unworthy ministers may receive some of the means thus raised, but dare anyone, because of this, withhold from the treasury and brave the curse of God?"*

**Faith For Today**

Melissa Reid
P. O. Box 600
Fulton, MD 20759

August 5, 1992

Dear Friend,

Please support your local church!

Our ministry here at Faith For Today is dedicated to supporting and expanding the work of local churches. We believe that no level of church organization is more important to the Lord's work than the local congregation.

So, even though Faith For Today cannot continue its ministry without support from partners like you -- and even though our needs for the rest of 1992 require income far beyond our existing budget -- please don't give to the ministry of Faith For Today without first returning a faithful tithe and supporting the needs of your local church.

That's what the Bible teaches, and that's what God will bless!

After returning your tithe and fulfilling your responsibility to your local church, please make the ministry of Faith For Today one of your highest priorities. Because nowhere does your gift go farther than at Faith For Today. I firmly believe that.

If you could visit our offices you would see that we get our work done with a "skeleton" staff. We do not tie up huge sums of money in buildings and equipment. And we have developed extremely economical ways to produce our "Lifestyle Magazine" pro grams.

If you were shopping around for the best place to invest your "missionary" dollars, Faith For Today would be a Best Buy!

Where will your gifts do more to minister directly to people's needs -- thus breaking down prejudice and preparing hearts for divine truth -- than right here at Faith For Today?

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Here's just one example: A viewer in Kentucky writes, "I awoke this morning thinking I can't get up today. (I couldn't.) Depression was setting in. I've undergone so much emotional stress in just this week alone. . . . But God knew your program was on; so He strengthened me and urged me to get up and turn the TV on. There you were with your guests talking about long-term emotional (family) abuse. . . . All you lacked was my body and my story on your show because you certainly had my circumstances."

She concludes, "Please send me your book on this subject -- A Matter of Life and Death." That book deals with a vital truth for our day -- the state of the dead!

Remember, too, that Faith For Today is directly owned and operated by the Seventh-day Adventist church. Church leadership asks us to finance this outreach ministry mainly with the help of friends like you. That's why we rely on your support so much.

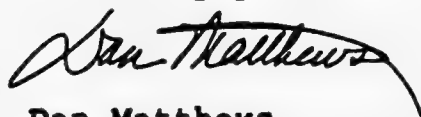
In our work here we are directly responsible to the church organization. So you know that we work in harmony with our North American and world church leadership and policies. And our financial affairs are subjected to the strict standards of both church and independent auditors.

You can be assured your gifts to Faith For Today are treated as the Lord's money. He entrusts them to us, through you, for the purpose of extending the loving ministry of Jesus to needy souls in communities like yours throughout North America--opening doors of hope and truth to those who are lost.

Your gift right now is especially important, since income is always low in the summer -- right when we are producing our fall programs. I hope you will use the enclosed envelope to make the best gift you can.

Thank you for being faithful friends. This work started and continues because of the Faith For Today family of supporters. God will bless as you continue to stand with this ministry as well as with the work of your local church.

Sincerely yours,



Dan Matthews
Executive Producer/Host

P.S. We could not continue without the freewill gifts we receive. Please pray specifically that our new programs will be powerful for God and that many will find salvation as they watch from week to week. Thank you for your valuable help.

APPENDIX XVI

AN APPEAL FOR CHURCH UNITY

An Appeal for Church Unity

The Body of Christ

Prominent among the metaphors employed by the New Testament to describe the church is the apostle Paul's figure of the church as "the body" of Jesus Christ. The Saviour is its head. "And [God] hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22, 23).

In this figure the church functions as Christ's hands and feet to carry out the will of God on earth and to reflect His character and honor to the universe of intelligent beings (cf. Eph. 3:9-11). Furthermore, the figure graphically describes the ideal unity that should exist between fellow Christians. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12). "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (verse 27).

Recognizing Christ as the "head" of the church, the believer is prevented from stumbling over some unworthy or failing member or leader. On the contrary, his faith locks in on Christ, the perfect Example and Saviour. "Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body" (Eph. 5:23). Such a relationship with the Saviour also leads the believer to love and support his brethren in the body. "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. 12:5). Inasmuch as individual believers compose the body of Christ, they belong to one another, are mutually dependent upon one another, and should care for one another. Members should be as concerned for the well-being of the church body as they would be for Christ Himself, were He present (cf. Matt. 25:40).

It is evident from Scripture that God intended for His church—as the body of Christ—to be in close bonds of fellowship with Himself and with one another. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship [*koinonia*] one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

The Mission of the Church

Heaven has entrusted "the church of the living God" with its message of saving grace. The church is "the pillar and bulwark of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15, 16, RSV). Jesus Himself commissioned His church to carry the good news to all peoples. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, bap-

tizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19).

The same task—with the added emphasis of the three angels' messages (Rev. 14:6-14)—is assigned to the remnant church, a responsibility Seventh-day Adventists take seriously: "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (verses 6, 7).

Writes Ellen White, "The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to 'the principalities and powers in heavenly places,' the final and full display of the love of God. Ephesians 3:10" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9).

In accordance with its assigned mission the functions of the church divide into two major categories: (1) a continuous evangelistic outreach to those outside its communion (Luke 24:46, 47; Acts 1:8) and (2) a continuous nurturing of the fellowship so as "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" and His return (Luke 1:17; 1 Thess. 1:9, 10). This twofold task highlights the unique role of the organized church.

Ellen White describes how the mission of the church was carried out in connection with the conversion of Saul:

"Jesus gave sanction to the authority of His organized church and placed Saul in connection with His appointed agencies on earth. Christ had now a church as His representative on earth, and to it belonged the work of directing the repentant sinner in the way of life. . . .

"He respects the means that He has ordained for the enlightenment and salvation of men; He directs sinners to the church, which He has made a channel of light to the world.

"When, in the midst of his blind error and prejudice, Saul was given a revelation of the Christ whom he was per-

secuting, he was placed in direct communication with the church, which is the light of the world. In this case Ananias represents Christ, and also represents Christ's ministers upon the earth, who are appointed to act in His stead. In Christ's stead Ananias touches the eyes of Saul, that they may receive sight. In Christ's stead he places his hands upon him, and, as he prays in Christ's name, Saul receives the Holy Ghost. All is done in the name and by the authority of Christ. Christ is the fountain; the church is the channel of communication" (*ibid.*, p. 122).

Unity in the Church

Because of the nature of the church (the body of Christ) and its mission (to make and nurture disciples in all the world), a harmonious relationship among its members and leaders is an absolute essential for its success. Ideally, the church should reflect the oneness of the Godhead: "There is one body, and one Spirit, . . . one Lord [Jesus], . . . one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all" (Eph. 4:4-6).

The apostles recognized humanity's tendency to divisiveness. Even when genuine conversion takes place and the Holy Spirit is in control, the Christian must surrender his or her will daily to Christ, or the self-centeredness of the carnal nature will reassert itself. Consequently, the apostles urged repeatedly the necessity for the growing and diversified membership to press together:

"Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" (Phil. 2:2).

"Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" (1 Peter 3:8).

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10).

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1-3).

The biblical appeal to maintain church unity comes with even greater force to the remnant church, which faces not only the gigantic task of reaching a burgeoning world population, but also the extreme pressures of satanic end-time opposition. Ellen White comments:

"Union is strength; division is weakness. When those who believe present truth are united, they exert a telling influence. Satan well understands this. Never was he more determined than now to make of none effect the truth of God by causing bitterness and dissension among the Lord's people.

"The world is against us, the popular churches are against us, the laws of the land will soon be against us. If there was ever a time when the people of God should press together, it is now. God has committed to us the special truths for this time to make known to the world. The last message of mercy is now going forth. We are dealing with men and women who are judgment bound. How careful should we be in every word and act to follow closely the Pattern, that our example may lead men to Christ. . . . We cannot afford now to give place to Satan by cherishing disunion, discord, and strife.

"That union and love might exist among His disciples was the burden of our Saviour's prayer for them prior to His crucifixion. . . . Jesus saw that their greatest danger would be from a spirit of bitterness and division."

"Divisions in the church dishonor the religion of Christ before the world and give occasion to the enemies of truth to justify their course" (*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 236, 239).

Some Causes for Disunity

From its beginning the church has had to meet a variety of forces that threatened its unity. We list a few:

1. **Fanaticism.** At times there are members who take extreme positions on certain Bible teachings. For example, among the Thessalonian believers certain persons stopped working at their jobs because they believed Christ's coming was imminent. These idle members troubled the congregation by their words and example. At first Paul counseled such to "study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands" (1 Thess. 4:11). Later he ordered "that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies" (2 Thess. 3:10, 11).

Knowing that a fanatical spirit is not easily put down, the apostle advised the church, "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (verses 14, 15). Ellen White comments on this occasion of fanaticism:

"The Thessalonian believers were greatly annoyed by men coming among them with fanatical ideas and doctrines. Some were 'disorderly, working not at all, but . . . busybodies.' The church had been properly organized, and officers had been appointed to act as ministers and deacons. But there were some, self-willed and impetuous, who refused to be subordinate to those who held positions of authority in the church. They claimed not only the right of private judgment, but that of publicly urging their views upon the church. In view of this, Paul called the attention of the Thessalonians to the respect and deference due to those who had been chosen to occupy positions of authority in the church."

"He also enjoined upon the church to separate from their fellowship anyone who should persist in disregarding the instruction given by God's ministers. 'Yet,' he added, 'count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother' " (*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 261, 262, 267, 268).

2. **Rejection of basic Christian doctrine.** Some early Christians began to teach: "There is no resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. 15:12). Hymenaeus and Alexander made "shipwreck" of their faith and were disfellowshipped (1 Tim. 1:19, 20). Hymenaeus promoted the belief that the resurrection was an event in the past. His false doctrine overthrew "the faith of some" (2 Tim. 2:16-18).

Within the first century some Christians began to deny the doctrine of the Incarnation (1 John 4:2, 3; 2 John 7), and the apostle Paul forewarned of a general apostasy away from Christian belief that would lead to the development of the "man of sin" within the Christian community (2 Thess. 2:1-4; 1 Tim. 4:1).

3. **Party spirit.** A party spirit early developed in the Corinthian church. Instead of looking to Christ as their head and pattern, members began to compare ministers and to promote favorites. The apostle Paul sought to correct this unfortunate attitude.

"Every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. 1:12, 13). "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (1 Cor. 3:5-7).

In applying these Pauline statements to our day, Ellen White writes, "God's servants are to work together, blending in kindly, courteous order, 'in honor preferring one another.' Romans 12:10. There is to be no unkind criticism, no pulling to pieces of another's work; and there are to be no separate parties. Every man to whom the Lord has entrusted a message has his specific work. Each one has an individuality of his own, which he is not to sink in that of any other man. Yet each is to work in harmony with his brethren. In their service God's workers are to be essentially one. No one is to set himself up as a criterion, speaking disrespectfully of his fellow workers or treating them as inferior. Under God each is to do his appointed work, respected, loved, and encouraged by the other laborers. Together they are to carry the work forward to completion" (*ibid.*, pp. 275, 276).

4. **Differing with the position of the church on nonessentials.** While fanaticism and wrangling factions threatened church unity, the largest disruptive force in the apostolic church was the determined unwillingness of a vocal minority to accept the decision of the Jerusalem

Council (A.D. 49) regarding the observance of the Jewish ritual system by Gentile Christians.

As a temporary system of types and symbols, the sacrificial system was designed by God to teach the nation the saving truths of the gospel: salvation through faith in the promised Redeemer (Heb. 4:1, 2). But in time Judaism turned the whole ritual form of worship into a system of works, adding numerous rabbinical requirements.

The report of the Jerusalem Council is familiar (Acts 15). The apostles, together with the elders and other leaders in a large, representative meeting, took the position that on the basis of the Holy Spirit's action, it was not essential to their salvation to require Gentile Christians to observe the rites of Judaism. The account implies a unanimous agreement, but subsequent history shows that it was not. Ellen White writes:

"The entire body of Christians was not called to vote upon the question. The 'apostles and elders,' men of influence and judgment, framed and issued the decree, which was thereupon generally accepted by the Christian churches. *Not all, however, were pleased with the decision; there was a faction of ambitious and self-confident brethren who disagreed with it. These men assumed to engage in the work on their own responsibility. They indulged in much murmuring and faultfinding, proposing new plans and seeking to pull down the work of the men whom God had ordained to teach the gospel message. From the first the church has had such obstacles to meet and ever will have till the close of time*" (*ibid.*, pp. 196, 197; italics supplied).

The brethren who disagreed with the Jerusalem Council are generally referred to as Judaizing teachers. Wherever Paul and his associates raised up new churches, these Judaizing leaders would infiltrate, undercutting the ministry of the apostle Paul and leading the people away from the Christian gospel to a Jewish form of the faith. The apostle makes reference to them several times, because their teaching made his work extremely difficult (cf. Gal. 5:12; 6:12, 13; Phil. 3:2, 3; 2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2).

Writing about this condition in the apostolic church, Ellen White notes why the newly formed Galatian churches nearly collapsed: "These false teachers were mingling Jewish traditions with the truths of the gospel. *Ignoring the decision of the general council at Jerusalem, they urged upon the Gentile converts the observance of the ceremonial law*" (*ibid.*, p. 383; italics supplied).

The experience of the remnant church has been similar to that of the early church. It has experienced factions and fanaticism; it has seen leaders and members apostatize from the common faith on the one hand and promote doctrines contrary to the common faith on the other. Apostasy may be expected, especially as the church nears the time of Christ's return (cf. Acts 20:29-31; 1 Tim. 4:1).

But while apostasy always takes its toll, one of the

heavy pressures on the remnant church today is the divisive effect of some segments of the church who nevertheless profess dedication to Christ and the finishing of the mission of the church. These members hold certain positions on the human nature of Christ, the nature of sin, and the doctrine of righteousness by faith in an end-time setting. Since the Adventist people as a whole do not share these views, the former feel that the church has apostatized from the faith of the pioneers. Some would even suggest that the organized church is no longer fulfilling the role of the remnant church as specified in prophecy.

In some respects the present situation is similar to the experience of the early church and the Jerusalem Council. The world church of Seventh-day Adventists has agreed on 27 fundamental beliefs, summarization of basic biblical teachings, and seeks to rally the membership to the Saviour and this core of Bible truths. The specific topics alluded to above are not a part of these summarizations. The world church has never viewed these subjects as essential either to salvation or to the mission of the remnant church. The Scriptures do not make these subjects central; the data is sparse; and there are sharp differences of view with devoted Christians on both sides.

There can be no strong unity within the world church of God's remnant people so long as segments who hold these views vocalize and agitate them both in North America and in overseas divisions. These topics need to be laid aside and not urged upon our people as necessary issues. We should not let Satan take an advantage of God's people at this point and allow such matters to divide us and, consequently, to weaken our outreach and fellowship.

Ellen White has at times written on the matter of doctrinal unity. While the situations may differ from our present conditions, helpful principles are expressed:

1. "I have words to speak to . . . all who have been active in urging their views in regard to the meaning of 'the daily' of Daniel 8. This is not to be made a test question, and the agitation that has resulted from its being treated as such has been very unfortunate. Confusion has resulted, and the minds of some of our brethren have been diverted from the thoughtful consideration that should have been given to the work that the Lord has directed should be done at this time in our cities. . . .

"We have a great work before us, and we have not an hour to lose from the essential work to be done. *Let us confine our public efforts to the presentation of the important lines of truth on which we are united, and on which we have clear light. . . .*

"This is not a time to make prominent unimportant points of difference" (*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 167, 168; italics supplied).

2. "You will take passages in the Testimonies that speak of the close of probation, of the shaking among

God's people, and you will talk of a coming out from this people of a purer, holier people that will arise. Now all this pleases the enemy. We should not needlessly take a course that will make differences or create dissension. We should not give the impression that if our particular ideas are not followed, it is because the ministers are lacking in comprehension and in faith, and are walking in darkness" (*ibid.*, p. 179).

"You are naturally combative. You do not care much whether you harmonize with your brethren or not. You would like to enter into controversy, would like to fight for your particular ideas; but you should lay this aside, for this is not developing the Christian graces. Work with all your power to answer the prayer of Christ, that His disciples may be one, as He is one with the Father. . . .

"This talking about divisions because all do not have the same ideas as present themselves to your mind, is not the work of God, but of the enemy. *Talk the simple truths wherein you can agree. Talk of unity; do not become narrow and conceited; let your mind broaden*" (*ibid.*, p. 181; italics supplied).

3. "As ministers, as the church of Christ, labor to be in harmony among yourselves, to be one in heart, one in sympathy. If you cannot all see alike on every subject, do not allow hard feelings to arise. When the cause was young, if there was one who did not view some point of truth as the body viewed it, a day of fasting and prayer was observed. We did not then try to see how far apart we could get; but we prayed, and searched the Scriptures, until the light of truth illuminated the darkened mind, and all could see eye to eye" (*Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, p. 125).

4. "It is necessary that our unity today be of a character that will bear the test of trial. . . . We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed" (*Review and Herald*, July 26, 1892).

5. "One man may be conversant with the Scriptures, and some particular portion of the Scriptures may be especially appreciated by him; another sees another portion, . . . and both may be of highest value. This is all in the order of God. But if a man makes a mistake in his interpretation of some portion of the Scripture, shall this cause diversity and disunion? God forbid. We cannot then take a position that the unity of the church consists in viewing every text of Scripture in the very same light. The church may pass resolution upon resolution to put down all disagreement of opinions, but we cannot force the mind and will, and thus root out disagreement. These resolutions may conceal the

discord, but they cannot quench it and establish perfect agreement. *Nothing can perfect unity in the church but the spirit of Christlike forbearance. . . .*

"The great truths of the Word of God are so clearly stated that none need make a mistake in understanding them. When as individual members of the church, you love God supremely and your neighbor as yourself, there will be no need of labored efforts to be in unity; for there will be oneness in Christ as a natural result" (manuscript 24, 1892; italics supplied).

The counsels of the prophetic gift are clear. There is need in all segments of the remnant church for more of the spirit of Christlike forbearance. It is evident too that the world church of the remnant people have selected and summarized "the great truths of the Word of God" in the 27 fundamental beliefs. But although thousands of hours have been spent by our people on the subjects of the human nature of Christ, the nature of sin, certain aspects of character development in the end-time situation, and certain interpretations of prophecy, there is no general agreement. Shall these matters, then, be made the subjects for discord and disunity among us? Shall these disputed topics be allowed to destroy our unity and turn us inward against one another, weakening our mission to the world?

The apostle Paul and his brethren were not able to prevent the Judaizers from dividing the churches over their staunchly held beliefs. The destruction of the Temple and the woes that befell Judaism eventually terminated the controversy. God forbid that His remnant people should wait until the final controversy over the Sabbath and active persecution to respond to Christ's prayer for unity!

The Spirit of Independence

A root cause of disunity is the spirit of independence. This is not always perceived, but the attitude lies at the basis of most factions and doctrinal disputes. Nursing such a spirit led Lucifer to rebel against God (Isa. 14:12-14), and it formed one of the appeals made to Eve in the garden (Gen. 3:5). It was the spirit of independence that caused one of Israel's most tragic episodes in the wilderness: the insurrection of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. It cost the lives of thousands of misled persons including 250 princes, "famous in the congregation, men of renown" (Num. 16:2).

It is the tendency of sinful man to be independent of his fellow beings as well as of his God. One strong evidence of genuine conversion, according to John, is that "we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14). Jesus Himself underscored this point when He said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). Ellen White has written at length on this threat to church order:

"How earnestly should the professed followers of Christ seek to answer this prayer [Christ's prayer for unity,

John 17] in their lives. Many do not realize the sacredness of church relationship and are loath to submit to restraint and discipline. Their course of action shows that they exalt their own judgment above that of the united church, and they are not careful to guard themselves lest they encourage a spirit of opposition to its voice. Those who hold responsible positions in the church may have faults in common with other people and may err in their decisions; but notwithstanding this, the church of Christ on earth has given to them an authority that cannot be lightly esteemed. Christ, after His resurrection, delegated power unto His church, saying: 'Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.' . . .

"If the world sees a perfect harmony existing in the church of God, it will be a powerful evidence to them in favor of the Christian religion. Dissensions, unhappy differences, and petty church trials dishonor our Redeemer. All these may be avoided if self is surrendered to God and the followers of Jesus obey the voice of the church. Unbelief suggests that individual independence increases our importance, that it is weak to yield our own ideas of what is right and proper to the verdict of the church; but to yield to such feelings and views is unsafe and will bring us into anarchy and confusion. Christ saw that unity and Christian fellowship were necessary to the cause of God, therefore He enjoined it upon His disciples. And the history of Christianity from that time until now proves conclusively that in union only is there strength. Let individual judgment submit to the authority of the church" (*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 17-19).

"He does not give one an experience independent of the church. He does not give one man a knowledge of His will for the entire church, while the church, Christ's body, is left in darkness" (*ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 414).

Seventh-day Adventists have never construed counsels regarding the dangers of an independent spirit to imply a rejection of self-supporting units that labor outside the denominational organization. The church encourages every member to be a witness for Christ and present truth. Within 50 years after the organizing of the General Conference, our first self-supporting unit began to function: the Nashville Agricultural and Normal Institute, later known as Madison. Today approximately 700 self-supporting units and businesses with similar objectives as Madison function under the General Conference umbrella organization known as ASI (Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries International).

Usually self-supporting groups view themselves as adjuncts to the organized church. It is the Adventist Church itself that provides the reason for their existence. Composed of dedicated, self-sacrificing men and women, self-supporting units have enlarged and furthered the cause

of truth over the years through a variety of operations.

While the ASI provides a loose linkage between the organized church and self-supporting units, it is evident that only confusion and a muffling of the message results if these two general divisions of the remnant church (the organized work and the self-supporting entities) do not see eye-to-eye in upholding the church and its message as agreed upon in the 27 fundamental beliefs. It is obligatory for the success of its mission that all units of the remnant church function in a spirit of cooperation and not of competition.

Writes Ellen White, "The Lord in His wisdom has arranged that by means of the close relationship that should be maintained by all believers, Christian shall be united to Christian and church to church. Thus the human instrumentality will be enabled to cooperate with the divine. Every agency will be subordinate to the Holy Spirit, and all the believers will be united in an organized and well-directed effort to give the world the glad tidings of the grace of God" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 164).

Such unity, born out of love and mutual respect, necessitates that the personnel of both the organized work and the self-supporting units uphold each other as both cooperate to present the common message with a united front. Satan is the "accuser of our brethren" (Rev. 12:10), but God's people need not be used as tools in his hands to destroy the united witness of the remnant. The tares as well as the wheat will always be in the church until the harvest. Sin will need to be reproofed, but it must be done in such a manner as to save sinners and not to weaken the structure of the church. In this connection Ellen White cautions against the free use of public rebuke:

"It has too often been the case that criticizing and denunciatory discourses have been given before a congregation. These do not encourage a spirit of love in the brethren. They do not tend to make them spiritually minded and lead them to holiness and heaven, but a spirit of bitterness is aroused in hearts" (*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 508).

Criticism and censure seldom, if ever, bring about repentance and contrition. On the contrary, they tend to divide the membership against each other and tend to engender a spirit of self-righteousness.

Authority of the Church

God never designed His work on earth to be a floating, disconnected, amorphous kind of entity. It is true that He recognizes individual believers in whatever communion or place. These compose what is commonly referred to as "the invisible church" (cf. Acts 10:34, 35). But beginning with Israel, God had a definite, organized, visible people, assigned with a task to be the light of the world (cf. Eze. 5:5; Isa. 56:6, 7).

Christ began the organization of the Christian church

with the ordination of 12 apostles (Mark 3:14). He affirmed that the church—His "called-out" people—was founded upon Himself, the eternal rock, the cornerstone (Matt. 16:18; 1 Peter 2:4-8). He entrusted to the church "the keys of the kingdom," the authority to bind and to loose (Matt. 16:19; 18:18), that is, the authority to carry out His will on earth according to God's Word (2 Tim. 3:15-17; Luke 11:52). It is thus, through the authority of His church on earth, that God has designed to have His work forwarded in an orderly and efficient manner.

"This statement [Matt. 18:18] holds its force in all ages. *On the church has been conferred the power to act in Christ's stead. It is God's instrumentality for the preservation of order and discipline among His people. To it the Lord has delegated the power to settle all questions respecting its prosperity, purity, and order.* Upon it rests the responsibility of excluding from its fellowship those who are unworthy, who by their unchristlike conduct would bring dishonor on the truth. Whatever the church does that is in accordance with the directions given in God's Word, will be ratified in heaven" (*Gospel Workers*, pp. 501, 502; italics supplied).

From a practical viewpoint the authority God has invested in His church is expressed through the leadership that His people appoint. Administrative leadership is a solemn responsibility, for it exerts great influence on the eternal destiny of those under its care. Christ called for servant leadership, not lordly:

"Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matt. 20:25-28).

The apostle Peter compared servant leadership with the shepherd model.

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly: not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:2, 3).

On this point of servant leadership Ellen White writes, "Those in authority should manifest the spirit of Christ. They should deal as He would deal with every case that requires attention. They should go weighted with the Holy Spirit. A man's position does not make him one jot or tittle greater in the sight of God; it is character alone that God values" (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 362).

Like a fever to an alert physician, divisions and heresies disrupting the unity of the church announce to servant leadership that all is not well with the church body. Such symptoms oftentimes disclose serious needs that the church

is failing to address. It is fair to listen, to reason together, to evaluate the complaint before decisions are made. Ellen White writes, "Those who are bearing administrative burdens in connection with God's cause can afford to be fair and true; they can afford to deal on right principles" (*Gospel Workers*, p. 452).

While Jesus reminds His people that "all ye are brethren" (Matt. 23:8), church unity calls for submission and cooperation with leadership as it functions in harmony with the Word of God. The apostle is straightforward on this matter: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:17). Sheep and shepherds form one flock. One important function of leadership is to prevent fragmentation of the church body. Ellen White writes:

"The Word of God does not give license for one man to set up his judgment in opposition to the judgment of the church, neither is he allowed to urge his opinions against the opinions of the church. If there were no church discipline and government, the church would go to fragments; it could not hold together as a body. There have ever been individuals of independent minds who have claimed that they were right, that God had especially taught, impressed, and led them. Each has a theory of his own, views peculiar to himself, and each claims that his views are in accordance with the Word of God. Each one has a different theory and faith, yet each claims special light from God. These draw away from the body, and each one is a separate church of himself. All these cannot be right, yet they all claim to be led of the Lord. The Word of Inspiration is not Yea and Nay, but Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus" (*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 428, 429).

In the early church, when persons were baptized into the church body under the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13) they were characterized as continuing "*stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship*" (Acts 2:42). But when certain independent teachers began to cause divisions and confusion within the body, refusing to yield for the common good of the church, the leadership was forced to separate them from the body.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences *contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned*; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17). "As for a man who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is perverted and sinful; he is self-condemned" (Titus 3:10, 11, RSV). In a true communion of the church,

motivated by love, such action would be taken reluctantly, and only as a last resort—for the sake of the unity and the success of the mission of the church.

Summary

God's remnant people face challenging times. As populations explode, the necessity of reaching the people groups of earth becomes more urgent. As time inexorably moves on, the challenge of nurturing the worldwide family of believers who await the coming of Christ takes on staggering proportions.

Within the church there are pressures on the one hand to delete certain doctrines and practices that are central to the Adventist faith. On the other hand, there are pressures to add—or at least to make prominent—certain beliefs that the world church does not recognize as essential to salvation. Debate and strife over large or minor issues dilutes the resources of the remnant church and diverts it from its world mission.

But we need not be deceived by Satan's artifice in this matter. We appeal to God's people to press together and to link arms around the common faith of the world church and as a united people—both organized and self-supporting units—to pull together for the proclamation of the gospel into all the world.

"Oh, how Satan would rejoice if he could succeed in his efforts to get in among this people and disorganize the work at a time when thorough organization is essential and will be the greatest power to keep out spurious uprisings and to refute claims not endorsed by the Word of God! We want to hold the lines evenly, that there shall be no breaking down of the system or organization and order that has been built up by wise, careful labor. License must not be given to disorderly elements that desire to control the work at this time.

"Some have advanced the thought that, as we near the close of time, every child of God will act independently of any religious organization. But I have been instructed by the Lord that in this work there is no such thing as every man's being independent. The stars of heaven are all under law, each influencing the other to do the will of God, yielding their common obedience to the law that controls their action. And, in order that the Lord's work may advance healthfully and solidly, His people must draw together" (*Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 257, 258).

Biblical Research Institute
August 1989

APPENDIX XVII

**OUTPOSTS CENTERS INTERNATIONAL MINUTES
ADVENTIST-LAYMEN'S SERVICES AND INDUSTRIES MINUTES**

AUG-28-92 FRI 12:06 OUTPOST CENTERS INC.
 AUG- 7-92 FRI 13:58 OUTPO

P.04/04
 P.02/02

Board of Directors

March 4, 5, 1992

MEMBERSHIP--
 HARTLAND

At the March, 1991, meeting of the board, there was extended discussion concerning Hartland Institute's membership in OCI, particularly as it relates to Hartland's stated position of accepting tithe from Seventh-day Adventist Church members (as opposed to OCI's non-acceptance policy). A committee was appointed that subsequently made several contacts with Hartland leadership concerning the tithe issue. Its written report (see attached) was presented to the Board at this time. Because of extended prior discussions and written documentation, it was

92.B22

VOTED, that Dr. Standish have up to one hour to present Hartland's position on the acceptance of tithe by supporting ministries of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and to allot the following 45 minutes for board deliberation.

During his hour Dr. Standish submitted a brief position paper indicating that Hartland would not speak or write on the tithe topic because of the polarization that inevitably results. He also pointed out a religious liberty issue and that each person would stand before God individually for what he does with his tithes and offerings. Dr. Standish said that he tells people who ask about the tithe question to read all that is written in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy on that issue and then to ask for God's guidance and the Holy Spirit's conviction before coming to their own conclusions. Dr. Standish answered questions from the board during his allotted time.

During the succeeding 45 minutes, 20-plus board members and invited guests made statements to the issue. By secret ballot it was then

92.B23

VOTED, that Hartland be dropped from membership in OCI (Vote: 14-yes, 5-no). It was further

92.B24

VOTED, that Harold Lance, Henry Martin, and Wilbur Atwood formulate a response to the Church which will both affirm OCI's conviction about the importance and sanctity of tithe. That they focus on the point that a "tithe rebellion" among church members represents a response to issues which the Church needs to address in good faith. That the letter, if possible, propose some resolution for a better area of understanding for both sides in the issue.

92-2

August 4, 1992, ASIBD

DUES INCOME ANALYSIS

Dues structure - proposed changes, which had been approved by the Board at its Winter meeting, was presented to the Board. They will be presented to the constituency at the special business meeting (notice of the Special Business Meeting was sent six week prior to the Convention).

92-41 VOTED to include on our financial statement to have a dues analysis by union and membership category.

HARTLAND INSTITUTE'S ASI MEMBERSHIP

H Lance reported that Outpost Centers had dropped Hartland Institute from their membership.

E Reid reported that several of the Hartland Institute staff have left because of Hartland's position. Their reason for accepting tithe is that the SDA church is apostatizing. Ed also pointed out that in his study and research, not once has EGWhite ever encouraged members to direct their tithe elsewhere.

92-42 VOTED to drop Hartland Institute from ASI membership on the grounds of their failure to comply with the "Guidelines for Supporting Ministries."

(H Martin & H Lance abstained from voting.)

H Lance recommended that the guidelines for supporting ministries should accompany an ASI application in our mailings.

ASI DIRECTORY

Harold Baptiste requested an ASI directory so that his office can refer to the directory when requests for travel come into his office.

92-43 VOTED to give Harold Baptiste a copy of the ASI directory for his reference only.

CANADIAN MONEY ACCOUNTING

92-44 VOTED to print on all official ASI documents (membership application, etc.) both the NAD ASI and the Canadian Union addresses.

92-45 VOTED to establish a specific dollar amount on our documents for Canadian membership dues.

92-46 VOTED to date the ASI membership application.

GO 92

Several of our ASI board members wanted the entire board to be aware of this program; Dec. 27 to 31.



G. Edward Reid, Esq.
Executive Secretary-Treasurer

August 21, 1992

Colin Standish
Hartland Institute
P O Box 1
Rapidan, VA 22733

Dear Colin:

Pursuant to our visits this Spring and the action of the ASI Executive Officers and the full Board at Palm Springs, it is my duty to inform you that Hartland Institute has been dropped from ASI membership on the grounds of failure to comply with the guidelines for supporting ministries.

This is a very sad announcement for me as I realize the great potential of you personally and the Institution there to make a positive contribution to ASI and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

I want you to understand that Hartland Institute is not being singled out on the issue of tithing, but there is a concerted effort among the ASI organization and the Church to more closely follow God's counsel in this regard. Accordingly, I have included a letter that my daughter, Melissa, received as part of a regular mailing to the supporters of Faith For Today. Please note that the Media Center is now taking a stand against receiving tithe and counseling their supporters accordingly. Note the first four paragraphs, please. I would certainly hope that some time in the future you can take a similar step and place yourself in a cooperative position with God's remnant Church.

In addition, I have just recently at the ASI Convention met the authors of the book I have enclosed, *Trials and Triumph of the Remnant Church*. I have read the book personally and recommend it highly and thus have enclosed a complimentary copy for you.

If at some time in the future Hartland chooses to take a position that is more supportive of the Adventist Church, we would certainly welcome an application from you for ASI membership. I know I speak for the officers of the ASI organization and the North American Division when I say that the door is always open for dialogue and we certainly want to maintain our friendship with Hartland.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Ed', written over a light-colored background.

G. Edward Reid
Executive Secretary-Treasurer

vrh

cc: Ray Hamblin
Bob Dale ✓

APPENDIX XVIII

HARTLAND INSTITUTE AND OTHER CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS



While fully recognizing the existence of flaws in those who lead the church, its members, and ourselves, we nonetheless fully support and commit Hartland Institute to the Seventh-day Adventist Church as the organization of God's remnant people.

Therefore, in order to show our support and commitment and to seek harmony with the Seventh-day Adventist Church we hereby resolve:

- 1) Never to receive tithe, knowingly, except it be provided by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists or its component Divisions, or Conferences, and further affirmatively to teach others the sacredness of tithe and the obligation to return it to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- 2) To refrain from allying with or supporting any independent or self-supporting ministry which does not hold a similar high commitment to the Seventh-day Adventist Church or which engages in any public criticism of it.
- 3) When any possibility for conflict exists, to secure approval from all affected Conferences, Unions, or Divisions before taking a Hartland Bible Conference, or similar activity, into any area.

AUG 18 1992

August 17, 1992

Elder Robert Dale
General Conference
N.American Division
Field Secretary
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

Dear Bob:

I have enclosed a number of items from my file on Hartland. The first item you will see is a copy of the page that I submitted to the October '88 board meeting at Hartland. The three point motion was debated for a long time, but was, in fact, voted. By the following meeting in April '89, myself, and I believe, eight others, had been removed from the board. To the best of my knowledge I never actually received minutes from the October '88 board meeting.

The next thing is a letter from Dale Martin, now a pastor in Pennsylvania, at the time, chairman of the Hartland board. The next thing is a copy of the April 17, '88 minutes, the results of which motivated me to carry out a determined effort to have the three policies voted.

The next 2 items are board member lists from '87 and '88.

The final material is a four part report that I pulled together during the summer of 1988 and presented to the board in advance of the October '88 board meeting at which the three policies were voted.

As I mentioned on the phone, if you decide that you want to use any of this material, I would like to notify Colin Standish and any others who might be affected in advance of its publication. I believe that would be the proper thing to do. Do you agree?

If there is anything more that I can do for you, now, or in the future on this matter or any other, please call. I will be in prayer for your efforts.

Sincerely,

[Paul W. Robberson]

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NEWSTART*
Lifestyle Program

Weimar
College

Weimar
Academy

Weimar
Country Inn
Seminars
&
Retreats

WziMart
Country Store
Lifestyle Products

Educational
Industries

Community
Service

SUBMITTED & VOTED
AT Oct, '88 BSD Mtg.
-Paul R.

12 October 88

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

It is with heaviness of heart and, yes, a sense of frustration that I write. Yesterday I had arranged Spirit of Prophecy quotes and my notes taken over the past few months that would enable me to support or counter all of the diatribes I've received over the past few weeks and months. But after a twenty-four hour reflection, I have decided that enough is enough. You've encountered plenty of evidence to make up your own mind, so instead I have decided to share just a few thoughts with you.

We have a saying down in my homeland of East Texas that goes "sooner or later the chickens will come home to roost." This has and is happening at Hartland. In other words a crisis doesn't produce character; it merely reveals it--eventually.

While it is true that indiscretions have been taken by both sides in the ongoing conflict, I for one do not believe for a minute that the serious and pressing concerns expressed from such godly men as John Goley, David Grams, Dennis Blum, Paul Robberson and others are inspired, as has been implicitly suggested, by the very Accuser of the brethren himself. But unfortunately, the issues raised have been skirted, manipulated and even ignored.

To help understand the direction of this current conflict it is helpful to review some of the first board meeting minutes in which the original mission of Hartland was articulated. The October 22, 1982 board minutes stated: "Glenn Hoffman called the meeting to order and Dr. Standish led out in a short devotional on unity and the need for broad counsel" (all emphasis mine). Yet the call we hear now is for us to ignore our brethren when they disagree with our understanding of "Truth" and to not seek the input of fallible man. The contrast in the stated philosophy of October 22, 1982 and the current direction is, in reality, the fundamental basis for the conflict that now exists.

In those same minutes recorded nearly five years ago, we can also find the following: "Voted: To develop the same kind of Institute for the Eastern States as Weimar in the West. This includes a college with a work/study/outreach program providing experiential and experimental opportunities on a regular basis. It will emphasize the major influential areas within the church: (1) ministry, (2) education, (3) health, and (4) business. The focus of the program is to train leaders for the work of God."

I fully realized that the current administration at Hartland believes that it continues to follow the intent of the preceding quotations. And in all candor, until a few months ago, I would have agreed. But like John Osborn and so many others, I've come to realize that as I maintained an "independent" spirit I was gradually apostacizing from God and His Church.

If one continues to criticize his wife, he will begin to disrespect her, and eventually come to despise her. This attitude can be seen in a number of those who have badly misconstrued the real meaning of the straight testimony. I believe that it is still possible for the authentic message of the saving Power of Jesus Christ to still have a hearing in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A beautiful example would be the "straight" yet loving messages presented by Mark Finley and others at the recent ASI convention in Calgary.

Page 2

So the real question in regards to this controversy is: Is it still important that Hartland's ministry not only be an actual part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but also be perceived as such? If your answer is no, or that it doesn't really matter because we only listen to the voice of the Lord, then I submit that Hartland must cease to use the SDA name and discontinue usage of Church ordination as credentials for the work there. As one local conference president told me, by taking tithe and adopting a hypocritical "we've got the truth" attitude, Hartland is setting itself up as a sort of "rogue priest standing at the door of the temple with an outstretched hand."

If, however, your answer is yes, that Hartland's ministry is part and parcel of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, then I call on you to join me in reaffirming Hartland's commitment to the mission and objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

A vote to reaffirm Hartland's original mission within the church doesn't mean that we should put on wedding rings, eat flesh or adopt the prelapsarian view of the nature of Christ. It does mean, however, that Hartland will not be a party to rebellion by unofficially soliciting or receiving tithe funds without the full cooperation of the church. It also means that Hartland, as voted by a 3-1 margin by the staff in the Spring, should refuse to associate with any organization that is decidedly placing itself as a lower of an independent attitude in relation to the church organization. In addition, a yes vote would publicly reaffirm Hartland's willingness to cooperate with the local conferences in all public efforts of both outreach and inreach in areas where this cooperation is vital to a good relationship. In those conferences where opposition exists, we should be willing to sit down and share our program which will, I know, in virtually every case, result in a green light.

Even in such hard core opposition pockets as the Dutch Union Conference, I know from personal contact that as late as October, 1987, the health ministry of Hartland was still welcome. Doesn't the servant of the Lord call the health ministry the "right arm"---the entering wedge---of the gospel? What a great opportunity this would be to assist in the development of confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy in a country where the confidence level is probably at an all time low. If that's all we can share, shouldn't we do it, instead of bullheadedly rushing in to preach to the handful that already agree with us anyway?

In view of the stated original mission of Hartland, it is important for each of us to remember that when Hartland was established with these principles, of those "founding families" with experience from Weimar (Goleys, Hammans, Blums, Grams and Standishes) only one remains. The tragedy is that we need not have lost a single family. The Martins were a Weimar family too, so my kinship with these people and this project runs deep.

Let me state unequivocally that I have no intention of limiting the ministry of Hartland. The facts are clear that the current direction of confrontational alienation is self-limiting. Therefore I believe that by voting in favor of

1. Refusing all known tithe funds

HARTLAND INSTITUTE
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
APRIL 17, 1988

2. Cooperating with local conference officials in all public inreach and outreach efforts
3. Refusing to support any ministry which does not openly and privately support the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and
4. Stating all of the above publicly

that, in the words of the Chesapeake Conference President, Wayne Coulter, "the doors of opportunity for working with the Church will open wide for Hartland".

This is my prayer for Hartland. I trust it will be yours.

With warm regards, I am sincerely

Your brother in Christ,

[original letter is signed]

Dale Martin

Members Present:

Dale Martin, Richard Mayer, Colin Standish, Joe Crews, Jim Drexler, Joe Engelkeimer, Darwin Heisey, Allen Hrenyk, Edwin Martin, Harry Mayden, Lester Ortiz, Paul Robberson, John Sines, Helen Socol, Harriet Ware.

Invitees:

Warren Peters, Leonard Willett, Dennis Blum, Hal Mayer.

1. VOTED:

To approve the Minutes of the Board of Directors of November 1, 1987.

2. VOTED:

To accept the recommendation of the Constituency to accept the Administrative reports.

Discussion:

Regarding church authority. It was pointed out that the highest authority on earth is the Word of God followed by the church. Hartland is not half in and half out of the church as an institution. It is fully a part of the church. It was pointed out that Ellen White was clearly balanced in relation to church authority and to the Word of God. The Church has full authority consistent with the Word. In areas where the Word does not speak, it also has authority. Should the Church ever legislate inconsistent with the Word, the Word retains final authority.

It was pointed out that Hartland has a mission and we do not want to undermine that mission. This institution is not to become just like other institutions. We do not need to, nor must we lose our identity. As part of Hartland's ministry, it is possible that opposition may come from church leaders in some places. However Hartland is committed to retaining strong loyalty to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its leaders..

This school exists because of a vacuum. This Institution stands for principle and conviction. It is important to the needs of a large portion of our people. People are hearing the message and are seeing our example of the principles of education. We cannot separate education and truth. It is all tied together. Do not

cut off an arm of this institution that is building up a contact with the SDA Church. Conflicts are over magnified. We also hear leaders expressing deep concerns about denominational institutions.

In relation to Hartland Bible Conferences, some of the staff are concerned about Hartland Administrators being away. Several actions were read which were taken by the Administrative Committee to reduce the impact on campus of travel of Administrators (see attached).

4. VOTED: To ask the Administrative Committee to prepare in concept the basic points of a comprehensive statement on mission and our relation to the church for operation of the institution and the hiring of staff.

Discussion Continued: On the authority of the church. It was pointed out that the staff need not over react to the criticism by some church leaders. If Hartland Institute is to be unique it is not going to be in the regular channels. Some will perceive it as being divisive, but this should not move Hartland Institute away from our basic mission and plan.

Several experiences were relayed of how Hartland has cooperated with the conferences in relation to Hartland Bible Conferences.

5. VOTED: To accept the following points in relation to tithe:

A). That Hartland seek official recognition from the Potomac Conference for the gospel ministry efforts which it performs, including Bible instruction of student, and thereby establish an appropriate stipend, commensurate with Hartland compensation levels, to be received from the Potomac Conference.

B). If such and arrangement can be made, any tithe funds received by Hartland are to be paid over to the Potomac Conference and the giver be informed of Hartland's arrangement and policy in advance of such submission to allow the giver time to retract the gift.

6. VOTED: To have an annual audit done in which a report is presented to the board.

7. VOTED: To present both sides of the Hope International issue in giving 20 Minutes to each position to summarize their points of view.

Discussion: Regarding Hope International. Three staff members presented what they believed to be the issue. Ron Spear is divisive and against the church. His statements, in some of his written and spoken word seem to criticize the leadership. Dr. Standish responded to the issues by placing the allegations and facts as he researched them, before the board in writing and he

reviewed them openly. Several questions were asked for clarification. There was concern expressed that we are damaging our reputation, and the church may decide not to work with us any longer in outreach, pastoral appointments, etc. One staff member stated that he held to his position that Colin Standish was a "captain in rebellion." He has seen where we are not following the leaders of the church. He was asked if he had spread his concerns within the Institute and he denied that he had done so. He was asked if he had spread his concerns outside of Hartland Institute and he indicated that he had. He had indicated that he had dialogued this at length with the Academic Affairs Committee after Colin Standish had written to him asking him not to agitate the issue on campus.

There was deep concern expressed that a number of staff members would resign from Hartland Institute if the recommendation of the staff was not followed. Concern was expressed that this action would change the basic direction of the Institute. It was stated that to just cut Hartland off is not the way the brethren in leadership work.

8. VOTED: That Hartland Institute hold in abeyance all relationships with Hope International until dialogue has taken place between Ron Spear, Colin Standish, Elder Frances Wernick and Elder Robert Pierson. Depending upon the outcome of the meeting, Ron Spear may be invited to Hartland Institute to dialogue with the staff.

9. VOTED: To reappoint all Hartland Institute Administrators in their present positions.

10. VOTED: That the next Board Meeting Weekend be Oct 28-30, 1988.

11. VOTED: To ask Dr. Standish to bring the staff together for a staff meeting tonight (April 17, 1988).

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703-734-1277

Harriet Ware 1989
17 Douglass Dr.
Newport News, VA 23601
804-595-0879 (H)

Don Yohe 1991
P.O. Drawer 250
Armada, MI 48005
313-784-5556 (O)
313-784-5346 (H)

Hartland Institute
P.O. Box 1
Rapidan, VA 22733
703-672-3100
703-672-3107 (Admin)

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Dale Martin, Chairman 1987
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Harriet Ware 1989
17 Douglass Dr.
Newport News, VA 23601
804-595-0879 (H)

Don Yohe 1988
P.O. Drawer 250
Armada, MI 48005
313-784-5556 (O)
313-784-5346 (H)

***Correspondence and Survey Responses Related to Issues of
Tithe, Hope International, Hartland Bible Conferences, and
Management Effectiveness at Hartland Institute***

**Personal and Confidential for
Hartland Board Members Only**

**Correspondence and Survey Responses Related to Issues of
Tithe, Hope International, Hartland Bible Conferences,
and Management Effectiveness at Hartland Institute**

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Section 1

Correspondence between P. Robberson and C. Standish

8112 Maryland Avenue
Suite 300
St. Louis, MO 63105
314-726-0010

Paul W. Robberson

May 24, 1988

Dr. Colin Standish, President
Hartland Institute
P.O. Box 1
Rapidan, Virginia 22733

Dear Colin,

Because your preaching and writing has been such a strong influence in my life, I find this letter gravely difficult to write, but, as a director of Hartland, I must. Your ministry to me is not diminished as I make this urgent request. My motive is the preservation of the mission and influence of Hartland, which I fear are near demise.

I call upon you to make an immediate turn-around in four vital areas:

1. Cut off all interaction with Hope International.
2. Take not one penny of tithe until official action is taken by the Potomac Conference Committee.
3. Assure the church that Hartland Bible Conferences will never go where officially advised not to.
4. Focus your personal labors primarily on the management and leadership of the College and the Health Center.

If you feel that you cannot, for whatever reason, take these actions, then I beg you to resign from the presidency of Hartland Institute.

I feel, Colin, that you have allowed your own personal desires to come before the good of the organization you superintend and that you have confused your personal agenda with the agenda of Hartland. When I, and others, try to bring these matters to your attention you seem to refuse to listen, but instead staunchly defend your own actions without a spirit of

seeking the counsel of others. Yes, you do make some accommodations toward the critique and counsel which rises around you, but that is where it seems to end -- accommodation -- not change.

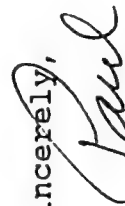
You have consistently defended your notion that your travel with Hartland Bible Conferences is vital to the mission of Hartland, yet the institution is dying for lack of management. You continue to allow Hartland to accept tithe in spite of inspired counsel to the contrary. You say that you are the final authority on when God has called you to preach the truth, yet you accept credentials and the security of retirement from the church which has at times seen differently. You persist in allying Hartland with Hope International even though such alliance has brought Hartland dangerously close to being cut off from the church, just at the time that its ministry is about to be embraced by it and given a leadership role in education and health reform. The very life of Hartland Institute is at stake.

As you consider my request I urge you to read the results of the survey that I conducted. Can you not see in it the vast majority of voices calling for these changes, voices raised by committed, conservative, reform-minded Seventh-day Adventists?

I have counseled with two others, Don Yohe and Dale Martin, about writing this letter but neither have read it, nor know its precise contents. Therefore I make my appeal brother to brother. If you cannot accept my appeal, then I will strive through appropriate means to have you removed as president.

I apologize for the personal hurt that I, no doubt, am causing you. My desire is not to see you harmed, rather to see Hartland saved. May your ministry flourish, at Hartland is my hope, but elsewhere if need be.

Sincerely,



Paul W. Robberson

enclosure

HARTLAND INSTITUTE
Box 1 - Rapidan, Va. - 22733
(703) 672-3100

June 8, 1988

Paul Robberson
 100 South Brentwood Blvd.
 Suite 350
 Saint Louis, MO 63105

Dear Paul,

I received your recent letter and have to confess that I find it so hard to answer. I believe it is fair to say that we share the same desire for the maximal fulfillment of the ministry that God has called Hartland to achieve. But as is not unlikely, we do not perceive the same pathway to that goal. In the momentous times in which we live, decision making does not get easier. I fully accept the likelihood that decisions made from the administrative committee may not always prove to be the best decisions, but I must say that every effort is made to listen to the voice of God and walk in His ways.

God has richly blessed Hartland and it is my conviction that He will continue so to do. Please pray that we will do everything from the right motives under the leading of the Holy Spirit and that wherever we make mistakes, God will through His Spirit lead us onto the pathway that He in His infinite wisdom has set for this Institution.

I have a great burden to see the Lord come soon, and I trust that each of us will be faithful to that day.

With Christian love and best wishes,

Yours sincerely,


 Colin D. Standish, Ph.D.
 President

CDS/cb

JUN 17 1988

8112 Maryland Avenue
 Suite 300
 St. Louis, MO 63105
 314-726-0010

Paul W. Robberson

July 14, 1988

Colin D. Standish, Ph.D.
 President, Hartland Institute
 Box 1
 Rapidan, VA 22733

Dear Colin:

As you know, following my last letter I received a call from Dr. Peters during which he indicated that the Administration Committee would send me a letter in which they would address the issues that I raised. To date I have received nothing. Your letter of June 8 completed avoids the issues.

I do not understand why the president of an organization would not correspond with a board member on issues which face the organization. I am at a loss in trying to determine your reasons for not communicating with me.

I am currently seeking the written comments, advice, and counsel of several presidents around the country at the Conference, Union, and Division levels. I also plan to seek counsel from the presidents of other self-supporting institutions. Depending upon their input, I will proceed to the next step in addressing the issues that I have raised.

Sincerely,



Paul W. Robberson

HARTLAND INSTITUTE

Box 1 - Rapidan, Va. - 22733

(703) 672-3100

July 26, 1988

Paul Robberson
8112 Maryland Avenue, Suite 300
St. Louis, MO 63105

Dear Paul,

By now you have no doubt received the letter from my colleagues. The reason for the delay, they tell me, was that Warren had reported a somewhat revision of your approach and it had been hoped that the reflection of time may have led to a different position. We had hoped and prayed for this.

Paul, it is much more difficult for me to deal with your letters because I count you a friend. I want you and all board members to know that I am ever willing to dialogue on any issues relevant to Hartland. It is my joy and privilege so to do. But you will, no doubt, recall that your letter was not a letter of dialogue nor of questions, but an ultimatum. There was no way I could answer it without appearing as inflexible and/or defensive. As a friend, let me suggest you avoid sending letters that attempt to paint the recipient into a corner. Such "no win" situations are never conducive to effective problem solving.

Things are beginning to settle down now. We are disappointed to lose some valuable families but perhaps in eternity it will be seen as working together for the will of God. We are delighted at the new staff God is sending. We are looking forward to a good year.

Paul, I must say that I am mystified by your approach. It is this approach of talking to all and sundry that has threatened to discredit Hartland. As a board member I would encourage you to cease your dependence upon the fallible opinions of men. Only the Word of God gives final authority to our actions. Christ made Himself of no reputation. Here are a few suggestions:

- 1) Evaluate whether I (or the Administration) have acted in violation of board actions.

Paul Robberson
July 26, 1988
Page Two

- 2) Evaluate whether I (or the Administration) have altered the direction of Hartland from its foundational goals.
- 3) Evaluate whether I (or the Administration) have been unfaithful to the commission of our Lord or to divine counsel.
- 4) Evaluate whether your demands as an individual board member were appropriate.

Three pages of the Spirit of Prophecy which we have found fruitful and helpful in our direction and ministry have been Testimonies, Volume 3, 252-304; Selected Messages, Volume 1, 193-209; and Testimonies, Volume 5, 207-216. You may like to read these to understand a little more fully the mission to which Christ has called Hartland.

I urge you not to spend time with other humans on this matter. I can find leaders and pastors that are strongly supportive of various self-supporting ministries and others just as strongly opposed. It is easy to get the answers we want. It is this agitation without, that has done great damage to the credibility of Hartland and has led to unfounded questions being raised.

In the last week we have faced these rumors:

- 1) All the physicians have left Hartland (Church member, Florida).
- 2) Three quarters of the staff have left (Student acceptee, Minnesota).
- 3) Hartland recently had a meeting about the church and 30 decided to leave the church and 10 decided to stay with the church (Conference departmental leader, Virginia).

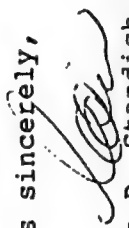
Please do all you can to speak well of Hartland and its uncompromising loyalty to God's truth and His church. Hartland and its mission was well known to you when you accepted the role of a board member. By becoming a board member, you accepted the responsibility of forwarding the mission and ministry of this institution.

Paul Robberson
July 26, 1988
Page Three

Paul, we need your prayers, we need your support, we need your understanding that we are seeking to follow the Lord's leading as best we know how. These are not easy times and inspiration indicated that times will get tougher as we come to the end of time.

May God bless and keep you.

Yours sincerely,


Colin D. Standish, Ph.D.
President

CDS/£1

Colin Standish
page 2

I believe that you have been unfaithful to divine counsel by accepting tithe. You have produced not one shred of inspiration to support this policy.

I believe my demands as a board member are both appropriate and dutiful.

I have read the Spirit of Prophecy passages you suggest and I find the following:

- o "I saw that many who profess to be keeping commandments of God are appropriating to their own use the means which the Lord has entrusted to them and which should come into His treasury." 3T, 269
- o "Those who have been regarded as worthy and righteous prove to be ringleaders in apostasy and examples in indifference and in the abuse of God's mercies. Their wicked course He will tolerate no longer, and in His wrath He deals with them without mercy." 5T, 212

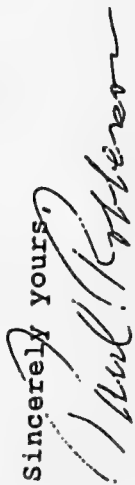
These two passages are an indictment of Hartland's policy of accepting tithe, its support of Hope International, and the practice of taking Hartland Bible Conferences to areas where the church leadership does not want them. God Himself will remove and punish any apostate leaders. It is not anyone's responsibility to publicly denounce or rebuke the church. Make your complaints known to the leaders, carry on an outstanding program at Hartland, and leave the rest to Him.

I assure you that I had nothing to do with the rumors you report. I am not concerned with rumors any way, but rather with policy and performance. That is my duty as board member. Since its inception I have spoken well of Hartland to many, many laymen, pastors, church leaders, business acquaintances, friends, and family. I believe, however, at present its loyalty to God's truth (i.e. the tithe issue) and to His church (i.e. HBC and Hope issues) is badly compromised. Further I feel that the management of the staff, the development of the health center, and the preparation of financial information is severely deficient.

Colin Standish,
page 3

I believe you must be held accountable for this, even to the extent of being replaced as president of Hartland, unless a full and effective turnaround is evidenced very, very soon. With regrets I remain,

Sincerely yours,



Paul W. Robberson

8112 Maryland Avenue
Suite 300
St. Louis, MO 63105
314-726-0010

Paul W. Robberson

September 11, 1988

Colin Standish, President
Hartland Institute
Box 1
Rapidan, VA 22733

Dear Colin:

I accept the advice in your July 26 letter not to paint you into a corner. Please though, come out of your corner and discuss the issues I have raised. You say that you are ever willing to dialogue on any issues relevant to Hartland, but you still have not dialogued with me regarding these issues, including this most current letter. Either you are not truly willing, or you do not believe the issues I have raised are relevant.

I do not accept your advice not to spend time with other humans on these matters nor your accusation that I have spoken to "all and sundry". I have addressed my letters only to presidents of church units and presidents of other self-supporting institutions. In fact, I find your advice and accusation almost frightening. It is as though only you and your chosen allies are the only ones capable of perceiving the Word of God. I will address the points of your letter.

I do not accuse you or the Administration of violating board actions. You are, however, operating without regard to the expressed concerns of several board members. Therefore on a legalistic basis you are clean, but relationships are badly deteriorated.

I believe that you have altered the direction of Hartland from its original purpose of operating a school and health center according to the inspired plan. You have done this by elevating Hartland Bible Conferences and an alliance with Hope International to fundamental mission status which is bad enough in itself but worse considering the breakdown in relations with the church that this has caused.

Section 2

Correspondence between P. Robberson and Adcom

HARTLAND INSTITUTE

Box 1 • Rapidan, Va. • 22733
(703) 672-3100

July 14, 1988

Paul Robberson
8112 Maryland Ave. Suite 300
St. Louis, MO 63105

Dear Paul,

The Administrative Committee has chosen to respond to your letter to Colin of May 24. We appreciate your concerns and are prepared to do all we can to resolve the conflicts here on campus. We have carefully considered each of the areas in question.

We firmly believe that Hartland was established on principles that embrace the broad scope of ministry and mission that God has chosen for His Church. Colin's mission is not different from Hartland's. His personal mission has enhanced it. We know of no one that has personally invested more of his heart and life to this ministry than Colin, yet his personal wishes, he continues to defer to his administrative team.

Hartland's basic vision and mission remain the same as that which was hammered out by the Hartland board in the early sessions of planning. We believe that Hartland continues to fulfill the purpose for which it was established.

In reference to the four areas you addressed, we submit the following:

1. Hope International: We recognize that the Church has serious concerns regarding Hope International. We have seen areas of concern ourselves, and yet we believe we have a responsibility to help Hope be reconciled to the denominational leadership. We are guardedly optimistic about the progress that has been made even since the board meeting.

2. Tithe: At the Board's request we have initiated dialogue with our Conference regarding the tithe issue and at the suggestion of our Conference President we are requesting Elder Pierson to dialogue this further with the brethren in leadership at the NAD and GC.

3. Hartland Bible Conferences: The Hartland Bible Conferences are a ministry to God's people and have become more and more an outreach to non-Adventists. In response to staff input, the Administrative Committee has placed restrictions upon the timing and number of Hartland Bible Conferences to strengthen Hartland's management and teaching operations. We will also do all we reasonably can to ease the tensions with denominational leadership.

JUL 19 1988

Robberson
July 14, 1988

Page 2

4. Management: Hartland has four partner ministries; Hartland College, Hartland Health Center, Hartland Publications and Hartland Bible Conferences. The farm (though not described as a ministry) is indispensable. All must be managed prudently and in concert with one another. Hartland Institute's management is built upon a decentralized model, with management designed to be primarily handled at the departmental level. The Administrative Committee as a team, takes responsibility for the decisions that are made. In recognizing the recent unrest on campus, we are committed to doing everything we can to restore harmony and unity.

We remain committed to follow the leading of our Heavenly Father. We are sorry for this unfortunate situation and thank you for your concern. We solicit your prayers and wholehearted support.

May God bless you Paul,

Your friends and brethren,

Leonard Willett
Leonard Willett

Hal Mayer

Warren Peters

Ron Goss

8112 Maryland Avenue
Suite 300
St. Louis, MO 63105
314-726-0010

Paul W. Robberson

September 11, 1988

Administrative Committee
Hartland Institute
Box 1 Rapidan, VA 22733

Dear Leonard, Hal, Warren, Ron:

I appreciated that you took time to communicate with me in your July 14 letter, although my intention was to correspond with Colin. He has subsequently written and I am writing back to him. I must say that I feel the tone of your letter is much less conciliatory and more defensive than the call I received from Warren covering the same topics. Also, I am curious why Dennis is not a signator to the letter. I am still quite concerned about the issues covered in your letter, in fact the more so considering its content.

I have gone back over my copies of early board minutes and do not find any of the four issues discussed. Possibly I do not have them all, but it certainly seems questionable to me to imply that these four issues were comprehended from the beginnings of Hartland. I was around in those early days and I do not have such a memory. I believe my hiatus gives me an opportunity to view the situation in a relatively clear "then" vs "now" way. Could it be that changes have crept in which are not plain to you because you have been with it day in, day out (except for Ron)? My own personal opinion is that Colin does have a mission, an agenda which is his own and is unyielding to those around him who may differ.

You state that Hartland has a responsibility to help Hope International be reconciled to denominational leadership. I flatly say - NO. Where in its mission can it be said that Hartland is to function as mediator for organizations or individuals. If so, then why only Hope why not hundreds and thousands of others. No, this has been an executive decision and one which is working to the detriment of Hartland.

Administrative Committee,
page 2

The mediating efforts expended would have been better spent on the staff.

I lost, for the time being, my point on the receipt of tithe. Doesn't it seem odd that Ralph Martin suggested that Elder Pierson carry out dialogue with the NAD and GC? Why not carry out the discussions directly? Why not include me, a board member with exceedingly strong concerns on the issue.

To say that you will do all you reasonably can to ease tensions with denominational leadership reveals much to me about your true feelings with regard to the SDA church and its leaders. It says you will make some accommodations but will still forge ahead against their will instead of seeking to be fully reconciled in Christ to your brothers.

Your statement on management is, pardon me, pitiful. It shows that you have extremely little knowledge of management, its content, its function, its tasks, its responsibilities. Management must be assessed on its performance not its form. The extraordinary delay and gross misbudgeting evident in completing the health center, the lack of financial operating information and controls, the staff unrest, are all indicative of poor management. You state the form of Hartland management as a defense. There are many management forms but performance is accomplished by managers and the senior executive must lead the way in every organization. Continuing management failures are an indictment of Colin's performance.

I am not the only board member who is concerned about these things, especially the one of poor management. My desire is to see Hartland prosper as an integral, but self-supporting, unit of the Seventh-day Adventist church. I am doing that by addressing policies and performances which I believe it is my duty as board member to do. I urge you to stop defending and start listening.

Sincerely,



Paul W. Robberson cc: Colin Standish

Section 3

Summary of Responses to Constituency Survey

A. What is Hartland's Mission

1. School

- A. Training an army of workers/young people (6)
 - B. Train young people & health center to show God's way of healthful living
 - C. Training missionary minded young people
 - D. Missionary training
 - E. To help patients & students get to know God & develop a lasting relationship with Him
 - F. Education of young people
 - G. Preparing people to finish the work & stand as examples
 - H. Scholastically to train young people for the organized work
 - I. Outreach to non-SDA's and training of young people to finish gospel
 - J. To prepare young people to need their God
 - K. Prepare students & give them a vision of preparing others for the 2nd coming
 - L. To train gospel workers to reach all people.
 - M. Train people in service of God
 - N. Train young people in the way of the Lord
 - O. College is most important because it "doesn't stop" - students are workers for life.
 - P. Train youth to share gospel message especially using health message
 - Q. To prepare well-balanced young Christian workers to spread the three angels message
 - R. Train for missionary service
 - S. Train to be God's witnesses in whatever line of work they are in
2. Health Center
- A. Taking health message to sick
 - B. Medically to prepare people with three angels message for the 2nd coming.
 - C. Medical ministry - health evangelism
 - D. Medically to point those in need to nature's God through the laws of nature & His blessing of the use of those laws
 - E. Provide desire to bring people to Jesus through health message
 - F. Teaching medical missionary work to students
 - G. Train medical missionaries (2)
 - H. Giving true health message
 - I. Promoting health
3. Other
- A. Training programs for church
 - B. Allow God to work through each of us
 - C. To represent fully the character of Christ to church and world
 - D. Prepare people to receive latter rain
 - E. To spread the gospel - do bible seminars
 - F. Public relationse
- B. How well is Hartland is fulfilling this mission?
1. Very well (6)
 2. Fair (2)
 3. Not well/poor (1)
 4. Pastoral evangelism - students are prepared with straight message - also need proper training in fiscal management

5. Partially fulfilling mission but HBC has divided interests - taking teachers out of classroom - students suffer - even weekend engagements prevent teacher/student interaction
6. Religion courses very good. Too little in practical arts
7. Good preparation for pastoral evangelism. Students discouraged because staff is often away.
8. President very seldom involved in their affairs.
9. Only average to below average.
10. Students unhappy with absentee teachers
11. Having a hard time getting teachers
12. Moving away from original mission
13. We are not where God can trust us to receive the full power of the latter rain
14. Existing program is accomplishing missionary training
15. Quite well - wonderful young people to work with
16. There could be improvement - students need to be "rooted or grounded" more in current issues
17. Only by God's grace
18. Scale of 1 - 10 Scholastically...Past. Evang. = 8
Business=4 Education=1 Medically=5 Medically = 8
19. Training is better than total outreach
20. Medically - quite well - Collegiate has strange mixture of worldly requirements and outreach, etc.
21. Should stress a spiritual prep. school - More time for fellowship & devotions
22. Lord has blessed outpost college area - Surrounding big cities are stagnate
23. Hartland has diversified into too many areas - loosing original focus
24. Hartland is floundering. They are dedicating themselves to church reform instead of demonstrating to
25. world the beauty of God's principles
26. Not real sure - need more information on what graduates are doing
27. The Lord is blessing but we have a long way to go
28. Reasonably well - we need more team work
29. Inter city work, field training could be expanded in large cities
30. Better than the union colleges

C. What could Hartland do to better serve its mission?

1. Include in Pastoral Evangelism as well as all other majors, at least one solid course in personal & administrative finance. Course in "Stewardship" doesn't go far enough. In education - not enough stress on lesson planning for teaching.
2. Reduce Bible Conferences or have them during summer or home leave times (2) Staff need to show
3. students that they are the first priority.
4. Stay Home!! (3)
5. Focus on getting patients
6. Have Colin do fund-raising - Advertise continuously
7. Put out Journal consistently
8. Reduce number of things trying to do there
9. Get qualified help in business office
10. Administration need to stay around more
11. Unite in truth & love under power of Holy Spirit

- (2)
16. Committed students
 17. Quality teachers
 18. Sense of Mission urgency (2)
 19. Following principles outlined by God (2)
 20. Earnest constituency
 21. Follows God's health laws closely, teaches straight testimony
 22. Excellent environment
 23. Health instructional classes
 24. Following blueprints of the "red books" (2)
 25. Dedication to Jesus
 26. Not owned or controlled by conference
 27. Education of youth in practical ministry
 28. Making community aware of SDA's

E. What is Hartland's greatest weakness, or need?

1. Staff and potential staff are wasted.
2. Administration needs to be on campus more fulfilling their duties (2)
3. Hartland Bible Conference taking teachers out of classroom
4. Grown too fast - causes financial difficulty - dependence on donations
5. Poor short & long range planning
6. No department budgeting with authority & accountability
7. HBC should be treated as a department with budget and proper reporting
8. Institute growth & expansion must slow down until cash flow is under control (2)
9. Must liquidate mortgage before making other heavy improvements
10. Spread too thin (3)
11. Administrators are gone too much / Lack of leadership. (5)
12. Qualified staff needed in business office (2)
13. Department budgets
14. Higher level of morality on campus
15. Not trusting judgements of staff
16. Better organization - more manpower
17. Eliminate self-centeredness from our hearts.
18. Establish departmentalization with financial responsibility and accountability
19. Budgeting
20. Give business manager power to manage
21. Financial business management at the top level
22. Too much emphasis on "glamorous conference work" not self-supporting work
23. Management of funds (2)
24. Following only part of counsel given by inspiration
25. Need to become truly locally evangelistic
26. Resistance by AdCom to input from staff
27. Inadequate business sense in Administration (3)
28. Reduce debt/ Follow principles of no debt (2)
29. Positive leadership needed. Chapel at least twice a week with staff sharing lessons learned from life
30. Need more love of God
31. Need industry
32. Publications need to come out more frequently
33. More prayer

12. More practical participation by all staff with students. More out-of-class time working together
13. Keep leadership home more
14. Do more P.R. to prospective patients & students
15. Need more organized industries for support
16. Get more staff
17. Become a 2 yr. spiritual /medical emphasis college 3 yr. Past. Evang. with 1 yr. practicum
18. Focus medical program to reach non-SDA's
19. Focus publications to reach more non-SDA's
20. Students seem stressed with their program
21. Seek the Lord for wisdom in all matters"
22. Increase spirituality - much prayer is needed
23. Stay home and tend the store. Students & patients suffer when the staff and administration are away
24. Work with the Country Life restaurant
25. More P.R. to inform about Hartland
26. Focus on college & health center. Period.
27. Manage home base more effectively.
28. Reassess our real attitude toward the church - press together.
29. Reevaluate the Hartland, Bible Conf.
30. Perhaps teach students mechanics of starting nursing home operations
31. Spend more time in prayer
32. We get spread out instead of doing a few jobs well
33. Pay bills on time
34. Daily rededicate lives to Christ
35. More communication - We need to voice concerns directly and not pass around misinformation to jump to conclusions
36. Build additional dorm facilities
37. Continue to increase capacity to handle more students & patients (2)
38. Train them to train others for difficult times
39. Expand and help start more similar colleges
40. Be more balanced - very dogmatic on dress code.
41. More P.R. - make it known if you do what Weimar does
42. Get health program into full swing.

D. What are Hartland's greatest strengths?

1. Spirituality of students & Dr. Standish
2. Dedicated Christian staff & families (24)
3. Consecrated students desirous of Christian Edu. (10)
4. Rural peaceful setting (2)
5. Preventative health care program
6. Strong religion & outreach program
7. Medical program very good but could be more effective with closer long term follow up of health guest.
8. Dedicated staff who are getting increasingly frustrated
9. The stand for teaching truth in both college & health center
10. Desire of staff & students to follow God's leadings through His Word
11. Spiritual leadership
12. Outreach
13. Health conditioning program
14. Medical program (2)
15. Basic underlying belief & enthusiasm for same goal & commitment to it

34. Church believing Hartland is an amputated part rather than an integral part of the body
35. AdCom needs to communicate well with staff
36. Too much travel
37. Need person skilled in fund raising
38. No realistic budget projections
39. Lack of understanding for cash flow planning for each year of operations
40. People neglecting their own spiritual life - becoming separated from Christ
41. Temperance - many overwork, short sleep & get sick
42. Failure to pay women equivalently to men for same task
43. Institutional interdepartmental meddling
44. Agriculture (2)
45. Public Relations (4)
46. Automotive shop
47. Vocational rehabilitation
48. Need larger number of dedicated workers (3)
49. Allow youth to come for character & social development - deemphasize intellectual development
50. Better acceptance of leadership in the main church
51. Sacrificial labor
52. Fanatic attitude on dress

F. What are the unmet opportunities for Hartland?

1. Financially, truck gardening to furnish food for cafeteria and sell locally be expanded. Idea of
2. chuck wagon with vegetarian sandwiches would provide a good opportunity for food service management
3. students, outreach ministry and adequate monetary cash flow and return. In the HBC's
4. students should be included - many would be happy to pay their own transportation
5. Doing more services within the close community - Teaching students to reach out in your own local
6. environment with long range plan of them teaching church members in their own area after leaving
7. Hartland
8. Starting up new churches in local area
9. Need to do more health outreach out of Hartland - we have nice facilities why not use them
10. If there are any - no one would have time to do anything because they're already stretched out
11. Radio, T.V. & other media presentations
12. Development of Worldwide Colporteur Training program
13. Effective marketing of books & tapes from Hartland publications (4)
14. Communicate consistently to a wide range of people by way of Newsletter
15. Need to make known to corporations who are looking for places to send their executives for reconditioning
16. Need a health food store/restaurant/bakery in the area to attract non-SDA's and acquaint them with items of food that we encourage (2)
17. Students need more contact with Dr. Standish - what an opportunity to

- learn, spending time with him, but he is gone so much
18. Yes, but much more staff would be needed - the city work could be increased.
19. Emphasizing Jesus and His love
20. Recognizing that it is not truth that saves but being sanctified by the truth
21. The last message of this world is God's love
22. Reaching the rich with the gospel through the health message
23. Hartland Publications - complaints about service & quality
24. Increase opportunity to learn labor skills
25. Involve students in a consistent coordinated fund raising program
26. Dilemma - can't meet needs of students when we are gone, can't meet opportunities for all the seminar requests that people want
27. Lack of outreach to cities
28. Consolidate rather than take on new projects
29. Take advantage of location in terms of progressive, upbeat people who, if acquainted with the goals &
30. mission of this institution would undoubtedly be most interested in learning of the program (3)
31. Get an 800 phone number to draw on constituents for various needs
32. Seek staff and middle management input for major decision making
33. Those opportunities held back by the Lord because we are not prepared through communion with Him
34. Adequately staffing business office
35. Promote the health center
36. Religious liberty more in public eye
37. Prepare students to be teachers in church schools
38. Develop a health message magazine like Vegetarian Times
39. In the summer use your staff to visit all churches within a 500 mile radius to speak on what Hartland offers.
40. Establish model senior citizen retirement village for residence of both ambulatory and non-ambulatory

G. What are the threats to the continued effectiveness of Hartland?

1. Three things lie at the base of every school of God.
1st, spirituality which is well met here.
2nd, good useful education which prepares the student for the job they have to do - both in head and hand.
3rd, is in solid self-discipline choosing principles over preferences in all areas - treatment of others and fiscal responsibility. This is not the message the students and staff are receiving and it threatens Hartland now and their ministries later.
2. Stop expanding until debts are cleared up.
3. Concerns over Hartland's sympathies with Hope International.
4. Another conference expressed that a coalition with Hope could seriously affect the prospects of our students getting calls from conferences.
5. Alienation from denominational organization because of taking Hartland Bible Conferences in a few areas where conference orgs. don't want us. (teaching students to rebel against church authority)
6. Association with Hope International (2)
7. Moral problems could destroy the work if continued
8. Lack of adequate financial information will continue to the financial slide

- to staff about what is wanted of them, and then let them do it.
2. To see Hartland out of debt with staff, administration and students actively working together in and out of classroom to further God's work. To have all our facilities "self-supporting" to provide institution with income it needs to operate a school according to God's plan.
3. Have a good working relationship with denominational work.
4. Fiscal operations in black. Mortgage paid off. College growing.
5. Publications and agriculture program.
6. Medical program full - sharing God's hope of restoration with clients on campus, in clinics in community.
7. College masterplan completed - starting many new churches.
8. To see Hartland running smoothly and financially stable.
9. To see many, many students trained to serve God through the missionary spirit training at Hartland.
10. Orchards and gardens thriving and producing bountifully which would then serve as a testimony for the value of true education.
11. Equal balance established in goal for missionary training between the college, medical and industrial programs - industry is not what it should be.
12. Farm program needs promotion
13. Financially solvent.
14. Some kind of food ministry in the city (restaurant or chuck wagon type thing) (2)
15. Increased effectiveness in witness due to an increased and broader understanding and application of God's love.
16. Debt free operation, full campus development, self-supporting operationally by proper profit margins on health programs and publishing programs (5)
17. To see it as a place where health professionals could come from all over and do medical missionary work
18. More room for students - better organization for teaching students labor skills.
19. To have city ministries outreaching and winning souls
20. School following all the counsels of God.
21. Debt free on campus leadership. (2)
22. Debt reduction, increased personnel & continued firm foundation conferences.
23. To be able to fulfill its original mission, spawn other similar institutions and put its employees on conference level salaries.
24. To be harmony with God's ways so He can bless with other such institutions all around the world.
25. Expanded curriculum due to enlarged enrollment and also a great thrust in healthful living that brings seekers from far and near.
26. Help turn the SDA organization around and finish the work - if not the organization, then independently of but cooperating with the denomination
27. To receive the latter rain
28. We be united and filled with the spirit
29. Firmly established on the rock
30. Medical work to take hold. More support from Adventists in East (2)
31. Continue to show that God's old ways still work today
32. That there be more "Hartland's" to be lights
33. A well functioning live in reconditioning center and be completely free of debt

9. Absentee faculty and Administration only increases the distance for effective understanding of student, staff and institutional needs.
10. If administration are gone students will be come dissatisfied and go elsewhere - if doctors are not here, patients will not come
11. Only if we forget the way the Lord has led us in our past history or if we do not continue to grow in the Lords leading (4)
12. Need to discover total indebtedness and renegotiate mortgage, then look at long term situation and improve efficiency and profitability within the income generating areas of Hartland
13. Indebtedness - land debt could close the doors permanently
14. Community businesses aren't getting paid as they should
15. Financial reputation will be ruined - we should not be debtors
16. Division on viewpoints of issues
17. Need more staff
18. Fragmentation of staff secondary to need for improved administrative function
19. Association with those who freely separate from the church proper (2)
20. Rapidly growing operating deficit and misuse of restricted funds - still not repaid at least \$50,000
21. Worrying too much about what people think in surveys etc.
22. Just continue as the Lord needs and don't worry about what they think.
23. Staff and administration could be more aware of fine line between legalism and liberalism. Sad to say, humanism and liberalism is invading the ranks of church. Danger to overreacting to the opposite direction and losing sight of the love and grace factor so vital in human relationships.
24. Debt (9)
25. Rigid rules rather than principles.
26. Tithe issue - Hartland should make it clear that they are in full support of the SDA Church and forward all tithe monies on to local conference. (2)
27. Association with fragment groups (Hope International) could cause some not to listen to Hartland's health reform message. (2)
28. Health of Hartland staff is major concern - staff must be representative of the principles they are teaching.
29. Eroding influence in the church
30. Slowness to pull our own act together
31. Devil always threatens but as long as we follow the blueprint we are safe.
32. Some want to pull back and just run a college & health message - we will loose our global perspective
33. When the time comes that we cannot buy or sell and Hartland is in debt what happens to the staff and students? Is there an alternate plan to survive?
34. If they allow their desire to get along and have peace to cause them to let the conference gain control in any form
35. If dedication dies
36. Avoid stressing of nonessentials, either in religious or health/medical features.
- H. What is your fondest hope for Hartland over the next 3 to 5 years?
- I. Departmentalization in fiscal affairs and clear positive communication

33. Widespread denominational acceptance - but never through compromise (2)

34. Expand labor for God

35. To complete physical building of plant

I. Are there any particular issues that you would like to see addressed at the upcoming constituency and board meeting

1. Departmentalization fiscally and decision wise as well as in responsibility and accountability.
2. Finances (8)
3. Hartland Bible Conferences (5)
4. Hope International question. (5)
5. Departmental budgeting and responsibility (3)
6. Limit on growth (guidelines at least)
7. HBC travel - stay home or get another team that travels.
8. Strengthening business office staff
9. Consistent source of communication to constituency
10. Internal financial analysis of financial productivity of every department on campus
11. Leaders traveling less (2)
12. Staff working with students on more practical skills & outreach
13. Having administrators not gone so much - especially Dr. Standish - we need them as much as other people!
14. Localization of ministry and good business practices
15. AdCom - has inertia against real change for fiscal sanity.
Four plus years of same leaders have created dangerous habits of resisting staff input. AdCom feels very threatened by our suggestions rather than wanting help. Their reactions leave us put down as if we shouldn't be involved. This is demoralizing.
16. Relationship to anti-organized SDA work
17. Strong fund raising program
18. Plow ahead on city outreaches by way of Country Life restaurants and van ministries.
19. Student industries. (4)
20. Speed limit signs on rt. 514
21. Tithe issue (4)
22. Criteria for health level of Hartland employees
23. Focus on mission of Hartland (2)
24. Skilled fund raiser needed or to be trained.
25. How to better help graduates get into medical missionary work, practicum courses, laboratories, etc.
26. College experiencing lack of long sighted leadership - we are not a team in the college faculty.
27. How to get the message out to the membership - health message.
28. Advertise, advertise whenever possible.
29. New approaches to the soliciting of financial aid from Adventists and philanthropies.
30. Lagging in the health aspect

Section 4

Correspondence from Presidents of church organizations and Wildwood

8112 Maryland Avenue
Suite 300
St. Louis, MO 63105
314-726-0010

Paul W. Robberson

July 13, 1988

Wayne Dull, President
Eden Valley Institute
6263 North County Road 29
Loveland, CO 80537

Dear Wayne,

I have served as a director of Hartland Institute for the last two years. I have long felt that, properly run, such institutions as Hartland and Eden Valley can be a tremendous help to the work of the Church. There are three issues facing Hartland which I believe could greatly diminish the relationship between Hartland and the Church. These are: tithe, Hope International, and Hartland Bible Conferences.

I would appreciate your counsel on these matters, especially the questions below. My plan is to collect similar input from several other church leaders and use the responses to communicate to my fellow board members and seek their help in clarifying the policies of Hartland on these points.

- 1) Under what circumstances, if any, do you feel it is appropriate for a self-supporting institution to accept tithe?
- 2) Do you have any suggestions on what type of alliances are appropriate among self-supporting institutions? Specifically, do you have any counsel with regard to Hope International?
- 3) What policy do you feel would be appropriate for Hartland when asked to schedule one of its Bible Conferences in an area where there may be some sentiment against them?

So that you may know my own personal feelings on these questions, my answers follow:

- 1) Tithe should never be accepted except under an arrangement officially voted by the local Conference Committee.
- 2) Considering the negative effect (my opinion) that Hope International has had on some individuals and its public criticism of the church, Hartland should have nothing to do with it. Further, any other alliances should be limited to membership in ASI and OCI and to minimally interlocking boards of no more than two common directors.
- 3) Hartland Bible Conferences should never go where the Conference, Union, or Division is opposed.

Thank you for taking time to help me. Any additional advice you have would be appreciated. If you would like to call me for clarification or discussion, my direct line at the office is 314-726-7405 and at home is 314-567-5765.

Sincerely,



Paul W. Robberson

Office of the President
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION



General Conference of

Seventh-day Adventists

CHURCH WORLD HEADQUARTERS: 6840 EASTERN AVENUE NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20012 USA
TELEPHONE: (202) 722-6000 • CABLE: ADVENTIST, WASHINGTON • TELEX: 440188

Paul W. Robberson
August 31, 1988
Page Two

August 31, 1988

Mr. Paul W. Robberson
8112 Maryland Avenue
Suite 300
St. Louis, MO 63105

Dear Paul:

Your thoughtful letter of July 13, 1988 regarding issues of Hartland Institute has been received. Please forgive me for the long delay in responding to it. You must admit that yours was no casual "bread and butter" correspondence. I did not wish to respond without due thought and counsel with the brethren. After pondering these questions for many days, I will attempt to give you the best of our mutual thinking.

First of all, there is the tithe situation. It is fraught with many difficulties. It is a biblical/theological issue and also an organizational one. Scripture is clear in regard to man's duty to be faithful in returning the tithe. Theologically, this is a given. The where it is to be given or returned and the how it is to be shared is an organizational issue. It is clear that for the church to exist, it must have authority. If there is no authority, you have no church.

Should everyone do as they wished in matters of belief and behavior, then there would be no need for what we refer to sometimes as the corporate church. Jesus clearly established the binding nature of church authority in His words to His disciples. Generally speaking, our church community has agreed that tithe from the members is to flow through institutional channels of the organized church. We must be frank to say also that some of our media outreach programs have received tithe from non-members, and with the understanding of church leaders have used these funds for the support of their ministry. But never has there been any agreement to allow an independent ministry or a church-sponsored outreach program to use tithe received from members. It is a well established position that the tithe of members is to be gathered into a central "storehouse" for the support of ministry worldwide. If there are any exceptions to this generally accepted view, they are few and far between and even these need to be carefully reviewed.

We must stay by the position that the tithe is to be gathered into the central treasuries of the conferences for distribution by policy as the counsels of the church indicate. This is not to say that such counsels are unchangeable, but as the growing and changing needs of the church are considered, a sensitivity to the needs of the field will dictate how the funds are to be shared. The New Testament church gave us a model. The counsels of the brethren prevailed, everything was done decently and in order.

In response to the second question, I would say it is not within the purview of the church to prepare a list of acceptable and unacceptable para-church entities (independent ministries). Some ministries are obviously in closer cooperation with the church body than others. Guidelines as to just what this cooperation means and how it works out may be useful, but judgment as to which entities are acceptable and which are not is something that we should not attempt to do here in Washington D.C. If there is to be networking or some kind of alliance among these institutions, they should seek the counsel of the local administration. The Southern Union has the Layman's Foundation. They work together very well and are a great blessing to the church. We also have ASI with its divisional organization and its union and conference chapters. It seems that provisions are already made for this kind of working together and sharing by working through the ASI channels. We can take everyone with us as we move forward. We should be honest, open, up-front, aboveboard about our aims and objectives and seek counsel at every step.

Now to your third question. I think once again that the policy should be to consult with the local fields and to be sensitive to what they are trying to do, their schedule of major meetings, programs, campaigns etc. All of us need to be in harmony with the calendar of special days and offerings. We should do our best to work in harmony with conferences, unions, and divisions. When the leaders of a self-supporting ministry work in harmony with the local brethren, and show themselves to be supportive, when their ministries are a blessing to the total church, the Lord will raise up friends, and they will receive calls from conferences and unions to fill special spots and needs. This is the day I long to see. If the Lord told us to make friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, certainly, we should do everything possible to make friends with our brothers and sisters in Christ. This will build confidence, and we will be able to support each other wholeheartedly.

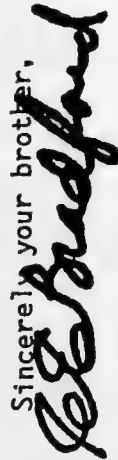
OUTPOST CENTERS INCORPORATED

Paul W. Robberson
August 31, 1988
Page Three

Your summation on Page two is not only acceptable, but it is commendable. The whole thrust of my letter is to support you and your convictions. Your spirit is good. The issues you have raised are of significant concern for the future of the organized work and its independent ministries. I believe that God has a place for both. If we are not careful, if we fail to talk to each other and counsel together, our best efforts will be misunderstood and both the organized work and the independent ministries will suffer.

Once again, thank you for your thoughtful analysis, and thank you also for allowing me to share your correspondence with a number of the brethren. With kind wishes and best regards, I remain.

Sincerely, your brother,



C. E. Bradford

CS

cc: Neal C. Wilson
R. L. Dale
R. L. Woodfork
G. H. Crumley

July 26, 1988

Paul W. Robberson
8112 Maryland Avenue
Suite 300
St. Louis, MO 63105

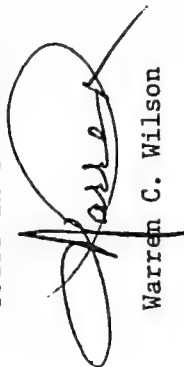
Dear Paul,

I recieved your letter of July 13 and am enclosing an artical that appeared in our newsletter and also in the "Self-Supporting Worker" some time back dealing with the subject of tithe. Not being very close to the Hartland situation, it's a little hard for me to know how they should relate to the issues you brought up. I will tell you how we have worked through the years.

We took a position when our work first started expanding, about 1970, that we wouldn't go where we weren't wanted. Because of that position we lost a good piece of property a man was offering us in Washington state. We met with the conference committee, made our proposal, and were told in no uncertain terms we weren't wanted. But the calls started coming in from everywhere and now we can't keep up with the calls that come to us through the church. It doesn't seem sensible to us to go where we're not wanted when there are so many places wanting our help. There is no question our church is going through a very serious time. If our eyes are half open we can't help but know that our church is in the shaking time. If we only looked at the dark side of the picture we could get discouraged and leave the church, but I think of the widow who cast her two mites into the treasury when the money was being squandered by the fat priest and how highly Jesus commended her for her faithfulness. This happened just before the Lord threw out the whole system and started a new church. There's a lot wrong with our church but I believe He wants you and me to do everything we can through our church and otherwise to bring it back to its loyalty to Him.

I hope in these generalities I have answered your questions. As I mentioned, not being closely involved with Hartland it's hard for me to be much help in evaluating your situation but we are certainly praying for this wonderful school.

Yours in the Master's service,



Warren C. Wilson

WCW:aec

Warren Wilson, President, Wildwood, Georgia 30757, Phone (404) 820-2611

DO SELF-SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS ACCEPT TITHE?

Traditionally, since the days of Madison, self-supporting institutions have refused to take the tithe. When Ellen White was promoting Madison in its early days she urged the conference brethren to help Madison financially, even though it wasn't owned or controlled by the denomination.

It is impossible to make the Madison school what is should be, unless it is given a liberal share in the means that shall be appropriated for the work in the South. Will our brethren act their part in the spirit of Christ? (Series B.No.11,page 3)

But there was never a hint that they were to share the tithe money with these independent institutions. As you read over the pamphlet published by the Ellen White Estate on the subject of tithe, "Ellen White and the Tithe," you will find that she, herself, was instructed by the Lord to distribute her tithe, at times, to some who were being neglected or were somehow overlooked in their ministry for the church. Some were ministers' wives who were sharing equally the burden of ministry with their husbands, some were workers in the south, etc. She even accepted tithe money from church members who were unhappy with the way it was being spent by the church and very carefully distributed it in the same way that she did her own.

But even though the Lord had authorized her to distribute tithe money, she always urged church members to pay their tithe through regular channels and she discouraged all discussion of the subject regarding her personal relationship to the tithe.

As the years have progressed, the Lord has blessed self-supporting institutions in their relationship with the Seventh-day Adventist church organization. One of the distinguishing characteristics of true self-supporting institutions has been a firm loyalty to the church. The goals of these institutions have always been to assist the church in its evangelistic outreach and its mission to the world. There are some areas with evangelistic potential that fit the talents of laymen and laymen-run organizations in very unique ways. These ministries, when carried on properly, have proved a blessing. Vegetarian restaurants, health food stores, conditioning centers, self-supporting schools, foreign missions have all made a distinct contribution to the work of the church. But they have never appropriated tithe money. They have a clear mandate from the Spirit of Prophecy for

soliciting funds from church members and it's because of donations given by those who have felt impressed to help that most of these institutions exist. But after they are founded and in operation they continue to exist from their own resources and methods of self-support. Some self-supporting institutions are baptizing hundreds of people into the Seventh-day Adventist church every year and, though ordained ministers are part of their staff, even they are supported by the institution and not by tithe money.

Why doesn't the denomination "pick up the tab" on these ministers?

Don't they have a perfect right to tithe money? There is no question about their right. However, they have chosen, as the apostle Paul did, to minister with their hands to their own necessities. The goals of self-supporting work are to assist the church with its mission, therefore these laborers are not asking how much they can get from the church, but rather how much they can give.

Self-supporting workers not only do not accept tithe for their own work, but they are tithe-payers month by month, paying an honest tithe into their conference organization. They believe in this church and though many problems and weaknesses are obvious, it is "the only object on earth on which He bestows His supreme regard."

Warren C. Wilson
Outpost Centers, Inc.
Wildwood, GA 30757
(404) 820-2611

"Brethren Sutherland and Magan should be encouraged to solicit for the support of their work. It is the privilege of these brethren to receive gifts from any of the people whom the Lord impresses to help. They should have means--God's means--with which to work. The Madison enterprise has been crippled in the past, but now it must go forward. If this work had been regarded in the right light, and have been given the help it needed, we should long ere this have had a prosperous work at Madison. Our people are to be encouraged to give of their means to this work which is preparing students in a sensible and creditable way to go forth into neglected fields to proclaim the soon coming of Christ." (Series B. No. 11, page 36)

August 4, 1988

Mr. Paul W. Robberson
8112 Maryland Avenue, Suite 300
St. Louis, MO 63105

Dear Brother Robberson:

Thank you for your letter concerning Hartland Institute. We have worked very closely with Hartland in the three years I have been in the conference and have had an excellent relationship with them. They have been helpful in the congregations that surround the institute, and both staff and students are dedicated, motivated Christian missionaries.

However, we have recently had to face up to the same questions that you have raised. Your three points express my feelings perfectly! I have told Dr. Standish that we could not support him if the Institute received tithe. The Bible says that tithe is to go to the church for the preaching of the gospel. If they receive tithe, they are setting themselves up as a separate church because that is the intent of the tithe. Dr. Standish suggested that some other independent ministries have worked out an arrangement with the General Conference to exchange tithe for nontithe. If they can work that arrangement with the General Conference, I am willing to cooperate with it; but I do not feel that tithe should flow to independent ministries. It is not in accord with the Biblical model.

I also agree with you that the close association with Hope International is highly detrimental to Hartland Institute. Elder Ron Spears has shown an independence—even a defiance—of the church that will tarnish Hartland's image. My understanding is that a great majority of the staff and students would prefer to have a complete separation. If Hartland Institute continues to value their association with Hope International more than their relationship with the conference, it will eventually severely hamper and perhaps destroy the spirit of cooperation that has existed up to this time.

Mr. Paul W. Robberson
August 4, 1988
Page 2

I also agree that Hartland should not take Bible conferences into locations where the conference or union specifically ask them not to come. It not only is a defiant act on the part of Hartland, but it will attract a group of rebellious, dissident church members who will use Hartland as a lightning rod to find fault with the regular church organization. Hartland then becomes the instrument to convey bitterness, criticism, faultfinding, and rebellion. I cannot imagine Hartland wanting to have that reputation in areas where their credibility is under question.

Having said this, I want to reiterate my desire to cooperate with Hartland. However, their present direction deeply concerns me; and if it continues, I feel that sooner or later there will be an unfortunate break in our present spirit of cooperation.

I am sorry that I am not able to speak personally to you. I tried a couple times to phone you but have not been successful. If you would like to converse further or if you feel I can be of help, please let me know. My prayers and best wishes continue with you and with Hartland Institute.

In Christian service,

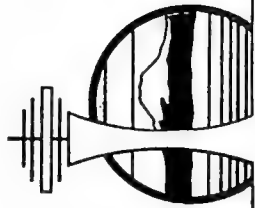
Ralph W. Martin

Ralph W. Martin
President

sk

5/4

AUG -5 1988



20015 Bothell Way S.E.
Bothell, Washington 98012
206-481-7171

Washington Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

July 29, 1988

August 1, 1988
(Dictated July 28)

Paul W. Robberson
8112 Maryland Avenue, Suite 300
St. Louis, MO 63105

Dear Paul:

It was good to visit with you by telephone this afternoon and I am pleased to respond to your July 13 letter.

I concur fully with the response to your three questions that you gave on page 2 of your letter and could not state any clearer my feelings on the subject.

As I expressed to you over the telephone, I have appreciated very much the kind of ministry that the faculty and staff and students of Hartland have given to the churches of the Potomac Conference. In addition, the young people have made a major contribution to our literature evangelism work in Potomac, Mountain View and Ohio as student literature evangelists in the summer. It would be my hope that the kind of relationship that is currently enjoyed throughout our territory with Hartland will continue. I see no reason for this to change within our territory as long as they stay away from the three items that you have suggested.

It was good to hear from you, Paul. I enjoyed so much the opportunities we had several years ago of working closely together and look forward to other such occasions in the future.

Sincerely,

Ron

Ron M. Wisbey
President

em✓

Mr. Paul W. Robberson
8112 Maryland Ave, Suite 300
St. Louis MO 63105

Dear Paul:

Your letter involving Hartland arrived just before I left for our union retreat. I will try to get a brief response to you.

As you well know, these are days when it is extremely difficult to carry on the work of the Lord because everyone seems to want to do what is right in their own eyes. The whole subject of the authority of the church seems to be swinging from a possible time when it might have been authoritarian to people outrightly thumbing their noses at the church. I see the doctrine of the church as being one of the main doctrines of the Bible.

I do believe that there is a place for self-supporting institutions, but they should be just that; not receiving their prime emphasis from the tithe of members of the church.

At this particular time, while Hope International may be endeavoring to carry on earnest and sincere work, there are questions coming from all over the division. To me it seems it will be up to Hope International to clear up these questions so their work will not present problems to such fine institutions as Hartland.

I say this with tears in my voice, Paul, for I would not want to condemn Brother Spear or any person who is trying to do the work of the Lord, but this church functions through the body of Christ and the remnant movement for today. I strongly agree that when various organizations of any group come into a given territory, it is very confusing if there is not some degree of unity between the self-supporting work and the organized work.

I wish I could be more helpful to you at this particular point, but frankly I believe Hartland should carry on its work in the manner that Weimar is doing it. When an organization majors particularly on critical approaches or basically spends most of its time looking inward, according to the Spirit of Prophecy, it is on the wrong track.

May God continue to bless.

Sincerely in Christ Jesus,

Lenard D. Jaecks
Lenard D. Jaecks
President
ah

UPPER COLUMBIA CONFERENCE

OF SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS
P.O. BOX 3039 • SPOKANE, WASHINGTON 99219 • TELEPHONE (509) 838-2761



Mid-America Union

CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

8550 PIONEERS BLVD.
P. O. BOX 6128
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA 68506
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AUG 15 1983

August 10, 1988

Paul W. Robberson
8112 Maryland Avenue Suite 300
St. Louis, MO 63105

RE: Hartland Institute survey

Thank you, Paul, for your letter of inquiry. I would basically agree with your responses to all three items.

On number one, tithes should not be voted to be accepted, even by a local conference unless the general church policy guidelines for the use of tithe are followed. I suspect this need not be said, however, I thought I would add it.

Keep up the good work. We, of course, keep somewhat abreast of your program through Dick Dutro in our office.

God bless.

Sincerely,

Jere D. Patzer

Jere D. Patzer
President

JDP/18908

July 20, 1988

Paul W. Robberson
8112 Maryland Avenue
Suite 300
St. Louis, MO 63105

Dear Paul:

I thoroughly enjoyed visiting with you by telephone the other day, and I really appreciate your concern that Hartland be in cooperation with the church and its program. I agree with you that Hartland, Weimar--and I might mention Eden Valley, Living Springs in New York, Wildwood Sanitarium in Georgia, and the Black Hills Institute up in South Dakota--are all valuable to the church. I'll be very happy to answer your questions to the best of my ability.

Question #1. I think any self-supporting institution should only accept tithe to be used to pay for its Bible teachers, and this only after an arrangement is worked out with the local conference--voted by the conference executive committee. I think at least a quarterly report should be sent to the local conference informing them of the tithe that has been received. This, then, would answer all questions that could be raised.

Question #2. I feel that if you really want Hartland to succeed, they should develop alliances with the long-standing, well-recognized, and well-respected self-supporting institutions such as I named above. I think those who are highly and harshly critical of the church and its organization and who are receiving tithe, etc., such as Hope International, John Osborne in Florida, and Charles Wheeling in Alabama, should be avoided.

I have personally talked to a leader of one of the legitimate institutions named above, and he told me that he was very careful not to ever invite these types of people on his campus. I personally would like to see Hartland succeed, as has Weimar and other strong self-supporting institutions, but it will never have the blessing of the church as long as it considers among its closest friends those who are constantly criticizing and tearing down the church. Oh, by the way, I might add that there is a group in Wichita, under the direction of Marshall Grosboll, who fits into the same category with Hope International and that group.

LOCATION: S. 3715 GROVE ROAD • I-90, EXIT 276

CONFERENCES: CENTRAL STATES • DAKOTA • IOWA-MISSOURI • KANSAS-NEBRASKA • MINNESOTA • ROCKY MOUNTAIN



*Iowa-Missouri Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists*

July 19, 1988

Mr. Paul W. Robberson
8112 Maryland Avenue, Suite 300
St. Louis, MO 63105

Dear Paul:

Thank you for your recent letter inquiring about my feelings as related to Hartland Institute and certain policies.

I would hasten to agree with you that I believe there are some positive aspects regarding institutions such as Weimar and Hartland, if they work in conjunction with our Church program. It would surely appear that Weimar has made a significant contribution and, also, I'm confident that Hartland has produced some good folk who can be successful in helping to advance the mission of Seventh-day Adventists. I do have a concern regarding some of the things you mentioned relative to Hartland.

Your first question addressed a matter of the appropriateness of a self-supporting institution accepting tithe. My response would be that I think it would almost never be appropriate for them to solicit or receive tithe. I suppose it's possible that someone on the staff might be designated as a chaplain and qualify in the ministerial aspect as being appropriate to be paid from the tithe. However, I think that would be an action taken by the Conference Committee and that tithe received through the institution would be forwarded to the conference and then, perhaps, an appropriation be made back to the institution to help with the salary or remuneration to that specific individual. To sum it up, I think that there would have to be a specific understanding and an official vote by the local Conference Committee, but I don't think that would indicate a direct receiving of tithe funds by the institution, but rather some way for the local conference to participate in helping to support the program of the institution in a way that tithe funds could be appropriately used.

Your second question had to do with alliances amongst self-supporting institutions and, specifically, any counsel that I might have regarding Hope International.

As to Hope International, I might say that I do not have a very good feeling toward what I understand is taking place there. We've seen a bit of the fruitage of this organization in some of our members here in our own territory who have become rather enamored with Ron Spear, his magazine, and his message and have alienated themselves from their local congregation and have become very critical and do not attend but rather view his videos and listen to his tapes

Question #3. I would feel that Hartland should definitely cooperate with the conference administration in whichever conference they have been invited to come. If that conference administration asked them not to come, then I think it's time for Hartland to do a little PR work with that conference administration--visit with them, give them some tapes of previous seminars, etc., so that they can see that it's legitimate. Unfortunately, Cyril Miller told me that my friend, Colin Standish, really got out of hand at one of the meetings in the Southwestern Union, and it took the conference officials many months to bring things back into line after he criticized the church so heavily. I wasn't there so I don't know but that's what I was told. I would suggest that you contact Cyril Miller for more of a first-hand report as to what these conferences have been like when carried on in the southwest.

Paul, I hope this has been of help to you. Thank you for doing your best to help Hartland become a good, strong, viable, and accepted institution.

May the Lord bless you.

Yours in the Master's service,

Joel

Joel O. Tompkins
President

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Paul Robberson
July 20, 1988
Page Two

in lieu of church attendance. I think we have seen the fruitage and we do not think it is good. I suppose that there could be some kind of loose-knit connection upon appropriate self-supporting institutions that might be proper and beneficial to them. I know some self-supporting organizations for which I have the highest respect and there are several of them that do work together in exchange of personnel and programs and that's good. While Ron Spear may have good intentions, I fear that the fruitage of his work is not positive.

Your third question was "What policy would be appropriate for Hartland when asked to schedule one of its Bible Conferences in an area where there may be some sentiment against them?" I believe they should not accept invitations where this is the case. They should earn their right to go to places by having a reputation for being very positive and winning approval so that they will be sought after, rather than imposing themselves in places where it is not deemed good.

I hope that you understand my sentiments and that I haven't been too wordy in trying to explain them. Again, I would like to see some of these institutions be very productive in soul winning and in contributing to the organized program of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Several are doing this very effectively but others are tending to bring alienation and separation among the brethren, and that's unfortunate.

If I may be of further help, please let me know.

Sincerely,

W. D. Wampler
W. D. Wampler
President

WDW:MKJ

SOUTHWESTERN UNION CONFERENCE OF
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Office of the President

July 18, 1988

Paul W. Robberson
8112 Maryland Avenue, Suite 300
St. Louis, MO 63105

Dear Brother Robberson:

Here are my answers to the questions in your recent letter:

- 1) None
- 2) Professional only. Not religious crusades to reform the church.
- 3) Regardless of positive or negative sentiment, they should always clear such a meeting with the area churches and the conference which is involved.

I answered before reading yours. They are about the same.

Sincerely,

Cyril Miller
Cyril Miller
President

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APPENDIX XIX

**CONCERNS FROM ALL LEVELS OF THE
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH STRUCTURE**

SHOULD ADVENTISTS Join Some New Movement?

*An inspired rebuke to those who seek to draw away members
from the Advent Movement*

By ELLEN G. WHITE

[In the year 1893 Ellen G. White prepared this manuscript, in which she exposed the false teaching of two brethren who had prepared and were circulating a tract called the *Loud Cry*, denouncing the Seventh-day Adventist Church as Babylon. Her message is equally applicable today, for false teachers here and there are strangely burdened to denounce the Seventh-day Adventist Church, associating it, in varying degrees, with the great apostasy described in Revelation 18. The solemn words of Mrs. White should open the eyes of all the honesthearted to the destructive program carried on by the different "off-shoots" from the movement. This letter, recently released, has not before been published.—EDITORS.]

Bank's Terrace
Wellington, New Zealand
June 12, 1893

Those who have published the *Loud Cry* tract have not consulted me upon the subject. They have quoted largely from my writings and put their own construction upon them. They claim to have a special message from God to pronounce the Seventh-day Adventist Church Babylon, proclaim her fall, and call the people of God to come out of her, and try to make the Testimonies substantiate their theory. These publications are misleading minds, and increasing the prejudice already existing, and tend to make it more difficult to get access to them to present the message God has given in warnings to the world of altogether a different character from the ideas presented in these pamphlets.

I arose at half-past two o'clock; I could not sleep; the burden was upon me. The history of the children of Israel urged itself upon my mind, and many points were so clearly pressed upon me that I dared not keep silent. I wrote twenty-three pages between three o'clock and half-past twelve o'clock. My spirit was stirred within me. I felt a burden for the people of God, not only on account of this one production, but because

of many such matters which are coming to the people, claiming to be messages from God. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

A number of these pamphlets came to the post office, with instruction to the postmaster to hand them to Seventh-day Adventists. The people of Wellington are full of prejudice. The circulation of D. M. Canright's falsehoods has created prejudice, making it next to impossible to reach the people, and everything of this character creates the suspicion that we are working under cover. These pamphlets and telegraph dispatches from Brother C are of a character to confirm these suspicions. All these things are closing the doors of the people against us. The way is being hedged up by just such things.

These men who think they are doing God service are working on the enemy's side, not on God's side. Yesterday I sent twenty-three pages of manuscript to Melbourne to be prepared for circulation among our people. Prior to this I sent a number of pages treating on the same subject. It will not be prepared to go in this month's mail.

A little leaven of false doctrine, under the inspiration of satanic agencies, may work much harm to those who are not rooted and grounded and unmovable in present truth. No one can be safe now unless riveted to the eternal Rock. We have every reason to be grateful and trustful in God. The Lord Jesus knoweth them that are His. He died to save a lost world, and He is gathering out from it an army to serve under His banner. And He will present to Himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

I understood that both these men were at the General Conference [held in Battle Creek, February 17-March 6, 1893], that is, S and C. Could they not discern there the revealings of the Spirit of God? Could they not see that God was opening the windows of heaven and pouring out a blessing? Why was this? Testimonies had been given correcting and counseling the church and many had made a practical application of the message to the Laodicean Church, and were confessing their sins and repenting in contrition of soul. They were hearing the voice of Jesus, the heavenly Merchantman, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

These brethren who claimed to have this wonderful light had the very same work of repentance and confession to do, thus clearing the rubbish from the door of their own hearts, and opening the door of their hearts to welcome the heavenly guest. Had they placed themselves in the channel of light, they would have received the most precious blessings from heaven. They would have seen that the Lord was indeed gracious, manifesting Himself to His people, and that the Sun of Righteousness had risen upon them. This was precious merchandizing actively carried on. The counsel of Christ to the Laodicean Church was being acted upon, and all who were feeling their poverty were buying gold (faith and love), white raiment (the righteousness of Christ), and eyesalve (true spiritual discernment).

Why did not these brethren fall into line, and place themselves in the

REVIEW AND HERALD

channel of light? They were poverty stricken and knew it not. They were not working in Christ's lines, were not softened and subdued by His Holy Spirit, and were so blinded that they could not see the strong beams of light that were coming from the throne of God upon His people. They heard not the voice of the true Shepherd. They were listening to the voice of a stranger.

When I consider the infirmities of these misled brethren, I feel deep sorrow of heart that they did not plead with God, "Bless me, O God bless, now I see my error. Thou art communicating to Thy people the richest truths ever committed to mortals. These people are not Babylon; for Thou hast given to them righteousness and peace; and Thy joy, that their joy may be full." O why did they not open the door of their heart to Jesus? Why not have removed right there all that obstructs the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness that they might shine to the world? While God's blessing was penetrating everywhere, while His presence was consecrating and sanctifying souls unto Himself, why did they not place their souls in the channel of light? It was because Satan had cast his hellish shadow athwart their pathway to obstruct every ray of light.

How could they come from that meeting where the power of God was

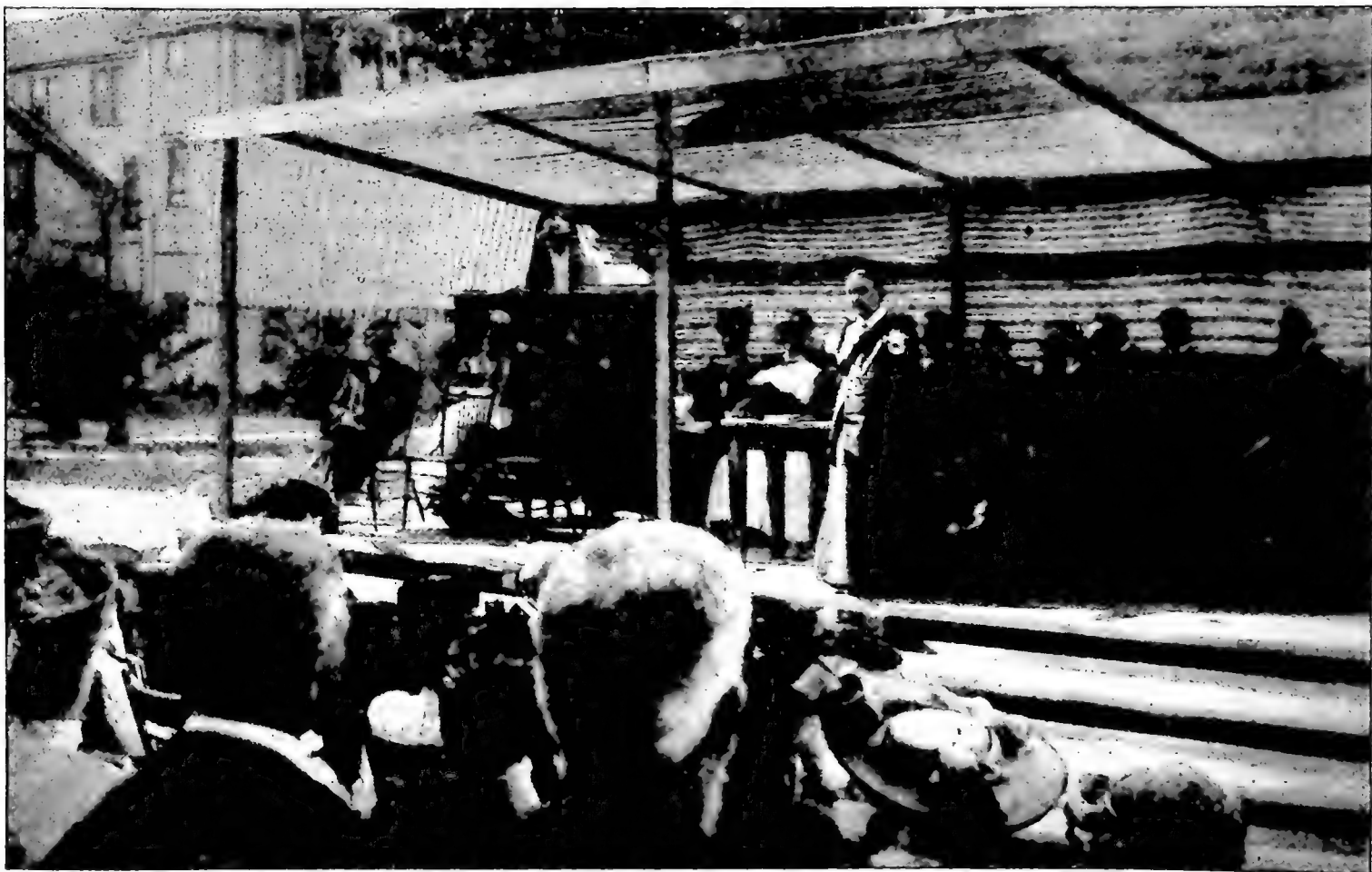
revealed in so marked a manner, and proclaim that the loud cry was that the commandment-keeping people were Babylon. Satan was saying that same thing to Christ when Joshua stood before the angel. Satan was declaring his sins to be so great that he should not be restrained from destroying him. The words of Christ are applicable to these brethren, and to all who advance similar sentiments. "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and stood before the angel." Who clothed him with filthy garments? "And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord stood by. And the angel of the Lord protested unto Joshua, saying, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; if thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by."

The work of Satan is to cover the repentant, believing, commandment-keeping people of God with defiling garments; Jesus Christ commands them to be clothed with His righteousness, garments woven in the loom of heaven.

What have our brethren S and C been doing? If they had been commissioned of God to do this work they would not need to appropriate the writings of Sister White, without consulting her or saying a word to her. If they have so large confidence in the work the Lord has given her to do, why did not they advise with her, and see if this wonderful message was in accordance with the instruction given her of the Lord? Why did they not have wisdom to go to work in the right way?

But theirs is a spurious message, of the same character of similar messages that men have claimed to have of the Lord. It is not as the bright shining of a candle lighted from the divine altar. When the Lord gives His people light it is light. It is not darkness and error, leading directly away from the true light which God has sent to strengthen and bless, and give hope to His people. These men had no right to appropriate the Lord's goods entrusted to His humble servant to trade upon and improve by trading upon them, and to place them in the

(Continued on page 20)



Ellen G. White addressing audience at dedicatory services of the College of Medical Evangelists in 1906, on the Loma Linda, California, campus. Through many counsels and warnings the special messenger of the Lord has held the remnant church steady in its purpose to declare the whole duty of God to this last generation.

Should Adventists Join Some New Movement?

(Continued from page 5)

framework of their errors, making it appear that it was the voice of God from heaven giving the "Loud Cry" that the church, His chosen people, who are keeping His commandments, are Babylon, and His people are called to come out of her.

I have no such message to give; but one of an entirely different character. My work is to seek to save lost, perishing souls, and to teach them as did Paul, who says, "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."

Now he brings before them another class: "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

In all ages of the world there have been men who think they have a work to do for the Lord, and show no respect for those whom the Lord has been using. They do not make right applications of Scripture, they wrest the Scriptures to sustain their own ideas. Whatever may be the claims of those who draw away from the body to proclaim theories of their own invention, they are in Satan's service, to get up some new device to divert souls from the truth for this time.

Beware of those who arise with a great burden to denounce the church. The chosen ones who are standing and breasting the storm of opposition from the world, and are uplifting the downtrodden commandments of God to exalt them as honorable and holy, are indeed *the light of the world*.

How dare mortal man pass his judgment upon them, and call the church a harlot, Babylon, a den of thieves, a cage of every unclean and hateful bird, the habitation of devils, making the nations drunk with the

wine of her fornication, confederating with the kings and great men of the earth, waxing rich through the abundance of her delicacies, and proclaiming that her sins have reached unto heaven and God hath remembered her iniquities? Is this the message we have to bear to Seventh-day Adventists? I tell you No! God has given no man any such message. Let these men humble their hearts before God, and in true contrition repent that they have even for a time stood by the side of the accuser of the brethren who accused them before God day and night. . . .

It seems almost impossible that anyone who had a genuine experience in the faith should suggest such er-

"Waiting Only to Be Gathered In"

The following experience by Olen Gilliam, of the Oklahoma Conference, gives proof of the statement in *Acts of the Apostles*, page 109, that "many are on the verge of the kingdom, waiting only to be gathered in."

"While canvassing in Blackwell, Oklahoma, a town where there is no Seventh-day Adventist church, I met an eighty-two-year-old woman who wanted to meet an Adventist minister. I asked the minister of that district to see the woman. After he had visited with her for a while, she went to the back room and brought out an envelope and handed it to our minister, saying, 'This is my tithe that I have waited seven years to give to an Adventist minister.' It contained three hundred dollars in one-, five-, and ten-dollar bills she had been saving seven years. She had heard part of the third angel's message sixty years before, but she had always lived in isolated areas. Today she is a member of the conference church."

If those whom God is calling to literature evangelism would respond, those seeking for truth would not have to wait so many years to hear the message.

B. E. WAGNER

roneous applications of Scripture as applicable to God's commandment-keeping people. Supposing this spurious message is the one everyone must hear for this time, "Come out of her, my people," where shall we go to? Where shall we find the purity, goodness, and holiness where we shall be secure? Where is the fold where no wolves will enter?

I tell you, my brethren, the Lord has an organized body through whom He will work. There may be more than a score of Judases among them; there may be a rash Peter who will under circumstances of trial deny his Lord; there may be persons represented by John whom Jesus loved, but he may have a zeal that would destroy men's lives by calling down

fire from heaven upon them to revenge an insult to Christ and to the truth. But the great Teacher seeks to give lessons of instruction to correct these existing evils. He is doing the same today with His church. He is pointing out their dangers. He is presenting before them the Laodicean message.

He shows them that all selfishness, all pride, all self-exaltation, all unbelief and prejudice, which lead to resistance of the truth and turn away from the true light, are dangerous, and unless repented of, those who cherish these things will be left in darkness as was the Jewish nation. Let every soul now seek to answer the prayer of Christ. Let every soul echo that prayer in mind, in petitions, in exhortations, that they all may be one even as Christ is one with the Father, and work to this end. In the place of turning the weapons of warfare within our own ranks, let them be turned against the enemies of God and of the truth. Echo the prayer of Christ with your whole heart: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. . . . I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Also this prayer which He offers to interpret the process through which His followers are sanctified: "Sanctify them through thy truth."

The door of the heart must be opened to the Holy Spirit, for this is the sanctifier, and the truth is the medium. There must be an acceptance of the truth as it is in Jesus. This is the only genuine sanctification: "Thy word is truth." O read the prayer of Christ for unity, "Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." The prayer of Christ is not only for those who are now His disciples, but for all those who shall believe on Christ through the words of His disciples, even to the end of the world. Jesus was just about to yield up His life to bring life and immortality to light. Christ, amid His sufferings, and being daily rejected of men, looks down the lines two thousand years to His church which would be in existence in the last days, before the close of this earth's history.

The Lord has had a church from that day, through all the changing scenes of time to the present period, 1893. The Bible sets before us a model church. They are to be in unity with each other, and with God. When believers are united to Christ the living vine, the result is that they are one with Christ, full of sympathy and tenderness and love. When anyone is

drawing apart from the organized body of God's commandment-keeping people, when he begins to weigh the church in his human scales, and begins to pronounce judgment against them, then you may know that God is not leading him. He is on the wrong track.

Constantly, men and women are arising who become restless and uneasy, who want to set up some new contrivance; to do some wonderful thing. Satan watches his opportunity to give them something to do in his line. God has given to every man his work. There are opportunities and privileges in the church to help those who are ready to die, and to inspire the church with zeal, but not to tear the church to pieces. There are plenty of opportunities in the church to walk in Christ's lines. If the heart is full of zeal to press on to a deeper sanctification and holiness, then work in that line in all humbleness and devotedness. The church needs freshness and the inspiration of men who breathe in the very atmosphere of heaven, to vitalize the church, notwithstanding the tares are among the wheat.

If good men and humble men will take up their duty just where it is, to help those who are ready to die, they will be a great blessing to the church. There are unconverted men in the church, and if those who are so longing to show their zeal for the Lord will seek these poor souls and work with patience and perseverance to win them to Jesus, God would work with them. "Ye are laborers together with God," not to tear down and destroy, but to restore. "Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way." There is an abundance of work that is needed to be done in home missions, and in exercising the talents God has given us, for wise improvement. We may become skillful as a tradesman in His business by practice. We want to become skillful in the trade of working to bless souls, learning to save souls. This requires prayer, and earnest, persevering effort, and a willingness to work in a humble way.

If the money that has been needlessly expended in the doing of works that God has not sent men to do at all, had been employed economically in ways that are simple and safe for the progress and upbuilding of Christ's kingdom in the world, instead of helping Satan to cast upon the kingdom of Christ reproach, and clothing His church with filthy garments as Satan is doing, and urging them into false positions by using the reproofs and corrections that God has given them to show them their sin;

what a great work would have been laid upon the foundation stone.

"Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." I would caution all believers to learn to maintain a godly jealousy over yourselves, lest Satan shall steal your heart away from God, and you slip unconsciously into work in Satan's lines, without perceiving that you have changed leaders, and be found in the treacherous power of a tyrant.

We are as a church to be wide awake, and to work for the erring among us, as laborers together with God. We are furnished with spiritual weapons, mighty to the pulling down of the fortress of the enemy. We are not to hurl the thunderbolts against the church of Christ militant; for Satan is doing all he possibly can in this line, and you who claim to be the remnant of the people of God had better not be found helping him, denouncing, accusing, and condemning. Seek to restore, not to tear down, discourage, and destroy.—Manuscript 21.

Heavenly Watchers Over Africa

(Continued from page 7)

2,200. That little flock of thirty-six years ago has now under the blessing of God become a vast multitude of 142,184 baptized believers. During the past year there were 19,462 precious souls baptized, who are now marching to Zion with God's remnant people. This means that every day during 1955, an average of fifty-three new members were added to the church in the Southern African Division by baptism.

Not only that, but our Sabbath school membership now exceeds 270,000. The Sabbath school membership of the entire world field was only 195,653 in the year 1920, when the Southern African Division was organized. Think of it! And now as I write this article there are 116,258 Sabbath adherents to the Advent faith in the Congo Union Mission alone. Companies of new believers led by humble Missionary Volunteer leaders are springing up in many parts of that mission field.

If the present upward pace continues, and we believe it will, soon, very soon, our Sabbath school membership in this one division field will equal

and surpass the Sabbath school membership of the North American Division, the home base. Surely, you will rejoice in this great manifestation of God's love for multiracial Africa!

Vigilant watchers stand guard over our educational and medical institutions. Under such divine protection our many institutions are both thriving and growing. First I would mention the large new ward wing and nurses' dormitory at Maluti Hospital, built on the slopes of the Maluti Mountains in scenic Basutoland. The new administration building for one of our oldest mission hospitals, Malamulo in Nyasaland, brings pride and joy to our hearts. Kendu Hospital in Kenya, East Africa, is undergoing a genuine face lifting, and when the wrinkles and cracks are all erased and plastered this old medical institution will present a youthful and wholesome appearance for the peoples around Lake Victoria.

Nestled among the verdant hills in the Transvaal is Sedaven Academy, which first opened its doors to our European youth in 1951. Today this academy has an investment of over £70,000 (\$196,000) and is free from debt. The commodious and attractive Anderson Auditorium at Helderberg College enhances the dignity and prestige of our European senior college for the Southern African Division. In our recent midyear division committee meeting, old Solusi Training School, the denomination's first mission school among primitive peoples, became Solusi Missionary College, now under the control and management of the Southern African Division. A full four-year college course will be offered for our African youth throughout the division. We are moving ahead under the watchful eye of Omnipotence.

Underneath the crust of poverty and national unrest there still is fertile ground, which when carefully cultivated will continue to bring forth a rich harvest. Africa today is still a land of unprecedented opportunity. But time is not on our side in Africa. We must work with rapidity and thoroughness. Unrest with its convoy of strife is spreading like fire in the stubble, bringing perplexing problems to our leaders and believers. But none of these ominous signs daunt us. We believe and know that God will bring to an ultimate triumph His cause in Africa. We are praying for a larger measure of His Divine Spirit in our lives. We want the spirit of Christ to be reflected in our work, and with Joshua Katapa of Barotseland we know that heavenly visitors will keep constant vigil over the work of God in the turbulent and troublous days that face our work in Africa.

STATEMENT REGARDING
HOPE INTERNATIONAL/RON SPEAR
APRIL 2, 1992
PAGE TWO

Beginning early in the 1970's, the General Conference and North American Division leadership felt concerned about the best way to deal with dissident groups within the Seventh-day Adventist family and some so-called "Independent Ministries".

Should we take a "hard-line position" and publicize the organizations that developed activities and programs apparently designed to be subversive and undermine church organization and its leadership? Or should we tolerate them, leave the matter in the hands of the Lord and let Him pull up the tares in His own time and way? We have been counseled to be careful about trying to make final judgment and to run the risk of pulling up wheat in an effort to eradicate, what appears to us to be, tares.

It is always perplexing to see a group of individuals who seem to accept and believe half-truths, who are always quick to believe the worst and slow to believe the best, who try to keep a record of alleged mistakes and short-comings, and who gather thorns along the way instead of roses and who ultimately participate in verbal and written statements that border on slander and character assassination.

What steps should be taken when sincere Christian endeavor has been made to counsel and appeal for reconciliation and it is spurned and looked upon as an evidence of weakness and insecurity on the part of the organized church? As one looks back, it seems it has seldom been productive to give the impression that a so-called "independent ministry" is being persecuted or "bullied" by church leadership. At times such an approach seems to elicit sympathy from unexpected sources for the "underdog" and antagonism against the "establishment".

During the 1970's and into the 1980's, there had been personal and informal talks and discussions between some of the leaders of these groups and various church leaders. Suggestions had been made that perhaps a group should meet together and discuss issues and any misunderstandings that had arisen and also explore areas of possible mutual interests and cooperation. It was felt that perhaps if we put aside some time to pray, study and talk over differences of opinion, as well as compatible viewpoints, we could develop productive working relationships. It was evident that a lack of understanding existed regarding denominational structure, authority, policy and procedural matters. To allow this to continue would only result in creating a divisive atmosphere.

NCW/4-2-92

As a result, it seemed desirable to call together a group to prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to reveal God's plan for His people and bring us into unity of faith and action. It seemed prudent and wise to follow the counsel of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy and to come together in a spirit of brotherly love and goodwill.

This was done on January 27, 1988. Attending this meeting were a number of ASI/Independent Ministry leaders and representatives of the General Conference and North American Division leadership. Involved in the meeting were ministries that give strong and loyal support to the church and its programs, as well as those who seem to sponsor a philosophy that is negative and undermines the thrust of the organized church. Included in the latter group were Ron Spear, Colin Standish, Charles Wheeling and John Osborne.

The record of the meeting will show that while no final reconciliation came about, there was a good exchange of viewpoints and in many ways a helpful spirit. It was felt, however, that in the future there should be more sessions of this kind and maybe additional private problem solving in order to obtain some of our hoped for objectives. Regrettably, however, this meeting also seemed to fuel some negative feelings and activities on the part of several of the individuals named above.

Personally, I have enjoyed some good spiritual discussions with Ron Spear over many years but in recent times there appears to be a "mind-set" that is adamant and inflexible. This can best be summarized by the following comments:

1. From what Ron says and does, it would seem that he believes the church has abandoned the standards and beliefs of historic Adventism. He professes a false piety and intimates that Hope International and its followers are much more in harmony with God's will and are much more righteous in faith and lifestyle than is the organized church.

STATEMENT REGARDING
HOPE INTERNATIONAL/RON SPEAR
APRIL 2, 1992
PAGE THREE

2. He is to be commended for putting great emphasis on heeding the counsel of God's messenger, Ellen G White, which is offered to individuals and to the church. It is regrettable that he seems to ignore the counsel regarding relationships with the world Seventh-Day Adventist Church and its leadership.
3. He selectively quotes from Ellen White on those things that support his thesis but seems to overlook counsel that is not compatible with his methodology and/or operational philosophy.
4. He leaves the impression that he does not need the counsel of the General Conference or any other church organization because he, as a Christian, has direct access to the Source of all wisdom. While this may be true, it certainly is not in harmony with the counsel this church has received. While I do not suggest he intentionally mis-uses Ellen White's writings, I do feel he does a disservice to her by not heeding all of the counsel.
5. He finds many ways to justify the use of tithe and donations from individuals because of the type of spiritual work and activity in which he is engaged.
6. It is open to question as to what the final fruitage will be of Hope International and its entire operation.
7. It is disappointing that if Ron and Hope International have a superior understanding of the gospel and are more orthodox in their acceptance of the message, then why do they not support and participate in the great commission of our Lord and Savior and become fully involved in Global Mission and soulwinning?

Why do they not take what they consider to be "the message" to the people on the street in New York, Los Angeles, Washington and wherever and reconcile godless and contemporary minds with our Creator?

STATEMENT REGARDING
HOPE INTERNATIONAL/RON SPEAR
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PAGE FOUR

7. (CONTINUED)

Why do they not attempt to reach every nation, kindred, tongue and people and participate in preparing a people for the coming of the Lord?

Why continue to press their case and be, as it were, a "spoiler" and cast reflection on the church and its leadership in general?

I believe we should make every endeavor to keep from judging or condemning but I also believe we ought to appeal for them to take the positive road. Even in God's timetable there is a time when enough is enough. If some corrective measures cannot be taken, then I think the opinion of many will be that Ron is an "offshoot", having resisted every attempt for reconciliation and in that case the Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy tell us to continue to pray for him, turn him over to God, but "let him alone".

NEAL C WILSON

j

NEWSBREAK

General Conference President Speaks About Independent Ministries

BY ROBERT S. FOLKENBERG

Dear fellow believers: I want to share a concern with you that lies close to my heart. Many of you have written or called me asking about independent ministries, and I want you to know where I stand. Is it true that the General Conference is out to destroy independent ministries? The answer is no!

I have been told there are several hundred entities not integrally connected with the church. Almost all of these make a significant, positive contribution to the mission of the church. Many of these are affiliated with Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries (ASI) and provide a wide variety of services to fellow Adventists and the public, including vegetarian restaurants, educational institutions, healthcare, publishing, religious radio and TV broadcasts, and orphanages. These prefer to be known as *supporting ministries* of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

One ministry supports a cadre of evangelists who are made available to church organizations around the world. Another, Maranatha Volunteers International, having overseen the construction of hundreds if not thousands of buildings for the church around the world, recently completed its largest single project ever—in the Dominican Republic, where more than 1,200 volunteers built 25 churches in 70 days!

By Their Fruits Ye Shall...

Organizations demonstrating by their fruit a commitment to the mission of the church merit both the descriptives *supporting* and *ministry* as well as the appreciation and backing of church members and leaders. For these, "organizational independence" is only a matter of function and legal status, not mission. Their loyalty to the church and zeal for proclaiming present truth are indistinguishable from that of the church itself.

I recently read two compilations of Ellen White's writings dealing with "self-supporting" work and noted two characteristics: 1. "Self-supporting" is normally linked to the concept of "missionary." Independence from the church was born of the financial necessity to send families to unentered areas as missionaries, not by a mission different from that of the church. 2. "Self support" is presented in the context of unity with the church. "The work of God in the earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work, and unite their efforts with

those of ministers and church officers" (*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 117).

The concept of an active laity and supporting ministry of the church is not only encouraged by Ellen White, but found in the example of the apostle Paul, who, by his own labor, supported himself and others as they spread the good news.



While the vast majority of these ministries truly are supportive and declare their loyalty to the church, a few private organizations, calling themselves "independent ministries," do not meet this standard. These point out what they see as deficiencies in the church, its members, and its leaders. Tragically, while subtly attributing these failings of a few to the church in general, they set themselves up as the guardians of historic truth and as the only trustworthy expositors of God's Word.

On this foundation of distrust they build an organization that is not accountable to any wide constituency; foments doubt, distrust, and disunity (impediments to the latter rain); diverts millions of dollars that might better have been used for gospel proclamation among the vast populations of the world that have never heard the name of Jesus; and at times even drives members from the church! (See "Poison in the Mail," *Adventist Review*, Mar. 12, 1992.)

Are there problems in the church? If so, do these failures justify the attacks by private organizations against the church?

To the first question the servant of the Lord answers, "There are evils existing in the church, and will be until the end of the world" (*Review and Herald*, Sept. 5, 1893). It's sad but true, for I am reminded every day that the evil one is hard at work within God's remnant church.

Continued Study Needed

To achieve personal spiritual growth and a deeper understanding of God's message to us, we must continually study the Word and the Spirit of Prophecy. But the exaggerated individualism that characterizes today's culture must not fragment the unity needed in God's final movement.

The vast majority of our teachers, pastors, editors, elders, and other leaders are firmly committed to the messages of the three angels of Revelation 14 and the fundamental beliefs that we hold dear.

Sadly, there are a few who, following modern trends, doubt

NEWSBREAK

the accuracy and/or authority of Scripture, reject one or more of these fundamental beliefs (the sanctuary and related truths are among the most frequent casualties), yet insist they have the "right" to remain in positions of responsibility. To these I appeal, fall on your knees and, with Scriptures in hand, search and pray until you have peace with God. If you find you are in harmony with the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, we will rejoice with you. If not, simple honesty and ethics require that you resign any appointed, elected, or employed position until you can embrace that which our church upholds as truth.

A more common weakness in the church, however, is not rejection of the truth, but rather neglect of prayer and study of the Word. In harmony with the Perth Declaration (see *Adventist Review*, Nov. 7, 1991), I plead with teachers, pastors, editors, and other leaders to preach the Word and feed the flock. Enough of salvation by psychology! We need a deeper understanding of the sinfulness of the human heart leading to repentance. Let us uplift Jesus and the cross, thus providing the sinner peace of mind, assurance of salvation in Christ, and connection to Him who is able to "keep you from falling and to present you faultless" (Jude 24).

Let me assure you I am not calling for uniformity. There is ample room for diversity in searching the Scriptures for truth, even while demonstrating a firm faith in the fundamentals.

Attacks on the Church

Do the failures of the church justify the attacks by private organizations against the church?

No! While there are problems in the church that must be resolved, these must be settled by those loyal to the church who are entrusted with responsibility at every level of church administration, beginning at the local congregation. Self-appointed critics, whose fiscal survival depends on their ability to shift members' loyalties from the church to themselves, have conflicting interests and therefore are untrustworthy counselors to the church. Their very survival appears to depend on the mix their leaders choose between piety and doctrine on the one hand and criticism of the church on the other.

The approaches of destructive critics vary widely. One group features the sensational, shrill, tabloid approach whose attacks stimulate a sharklike feeding frenzy against the church, albeit among a narrow audience. One of these, for example, recently reported falsely that I visited the pope twice this past year! The author never even called to check the "facts." One cannot help wondering why such an erroneous report was printed. The truth is that, I have never seen,

met, or talked with the pope and have no reason or plan to do so. Neither has he asked for an appointment to see me!

A False Litmus Test of Orthodoxy

The mix of piety and criticism among others is more subtle. Their publications include a far higher proportion of that which is spiritual or doctrinal in nature, including reprinting of major segments of the Spirit of Prophecy. By proclaiming their convictions on a narrow list of topics, not accepted by the body as a whole as vital to our message, they, in effect, turn acceptance of their position on these issues into a litmus test of orthodoxy. Thus they draw a pious line in the sand by leading their readers/listeners to choose whom they will trust, the church or their private organization.

Some ministries in the name of piety and preaching the straight testimony present quotations of Ellen White that encourage independent, self-supporting missionaries. At the same time they ignore the quotations calling for

unity and the yielding of individual wisdom to the body of believers (*Historical Sketches*, pp. 122-125). Such behavior misrepresents spiritual counsel and gives the appearance of intellectual dishonesty. Tragically, the gullible are their lawful prey.

About these private organizations the servant of the Lord wrote: "Those who start up to proclaim a message on their own individual responsibility, who, while claiming to be taught and led of God, still make it their special work to tear down that which God has been for years building up, are not doing the will of God. Be it known that these men are on the side of the great deceiver. Believe them not. They are allying themselves with the enemies of God and the truth. They will deride the order of the ministry as a system of priestcraft. From such turn away, have no fellowship with their message, however much they may quote the *Testimonies* and seek to entrench themselves behind them. Receive them not, for God has not given them this work to do. The result of such work will be unbelief in the *Testimonies*, and, as far as possible, they will make of none effect the work that I have for years been doing.... Those who thus bring the work of God into disrepute will have to answer before God for the work they are doing" (*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 51, 52).

The church is being attacked from within by people on two extremes. One extreme undermines the authority of Scripture, our fundamental beliefs, and our distinctive end-time message. The other extreme, under the subtle guise of piety, attacks the structure, authority, and therefore the mission of the church. The church has, all too often, failed to address both attacks adequately.

*The approaches of
destructive critics vary
widely—from the
sensational and shrill
to the subtle and shrewd.*

NEWSBREAK

Both extremes are destructive to God's expectations of His church. Both bring about disunity, an obstacle to the latter rain, and divert resources from our Lord's mission to His church. "There is a great work to be done in the world, a great work to be done in foreign lands.... With all the responsibility upon us to go and preach the gospel to every creature, there is a great need of men and means, and Satan is at work in every conceivable way to tie up means.... The money that should be used in doing the good work of building houses of worship, of establishing schools..., is diverted from a channel of usefulness and blessing into a channel of evil and-cursing" (*ibid.*, p. 43).

Jesus knew that the evil one would try to bring about disunity. Our Lord described the consequences of disunity when He said, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand" (Matt. 12:25, NKJV). The apostolic record confirms the early church's struggle for unity.

*Let us cease the
derogatory remarks about
others and follow Jesus'
plan in dealing with
wrong.*

Jesus' Plan for Unity

Jesus' divine plan to resolve differences, as described in Matthew 18:15-17, is too often ignored or forgotten. As your president, I ask your forgiveness for times when I may have skipped over any of the steps outlined in God's plan. Please pray that God will grant wisdom to those who must deal with those organizations whose activities tend to undermine either truth or mission. All church initiatives must be compassionate yet sustain the integrity of the church body.

I appeal to each pastor, Bible teacher, administrator, church board member, and leader to uphold God's Word and the teachings of God's remnant church and, following these biblical steps, under the guidance of the Spirit, work together to keep our church unified. To all, laity and employees alike, let us cease the derogatory remarks about others and follow Jesus' plan in dealing with wrong.

If the plan described in Matthew 18 doesn't seem to fit the problem you see, consider that it may not be a problem God has given you to resolve. Trust that God, who is in charge of all things, will use those He has delegated to "right the ship." On the other hand, if a problem is within your area of responsibility, pray that God will give you the wisdom and courage to carry out *your* responsibility.

Collective Selfishness or Sacrifice?

I wish each could share the burden of opportunities waiting for action. For example, the doors into one of the largest Muslim countries in the world have been flung open. Also, today we can send a large number of workers to China and the countries of the former U.S.S.R., yet sufficient resources

are not available to respond to these opportunities.

There are many reasons for this, such as collective *selfishness* instead of collective *sacrifice*. Many of us expect the church to meet so many of our felt needs, without the balancing Macedonian call from the unentered areas of the world, that we do good things to an excess! Too often resources needed to reach others with the gospel are consumed by those who already have received the good news. Another reason is diverted resources. The dollars diverted to the few

private organizations whose activities lead to disunity and shifted loyalties are resources Mrs. White said would be better used for gospel proclamation.

It is indispensable that each of us, prayerfully guided by the Holy Spirit, evaluate each private organization. Those whose loyalty to the message *and* mission of the church are above reproach, whose fruit gives evidence of new souls for the kingdom, deserve our prayers and support. On the other hand, those who cause the reader or viewer, whether subtly or directly, to

choose between them and the church demonstrate that they are not inspired of God.

I admit to increasing frustration in dealing with this situation. Last summer, just before standing to preach a Sabbath sermon at a Canadian camp meeting, I was handed a sheaf of bulletins from another shrilly critical editor. I shared with the congregation my frustration with these destructive critics of the church. In retrospect, I wish I had shared my convictions with more tears in my voice and the pain in my heart rather than just the frustration. This is just evidence that God is not finished with me yet.

I love this church. I believe our fundamental beliefs with all my heart. I believe the Lord's gospel commission was not a suggestion but a mandate. I believe Jesus is coming, and soon, sooner than most of us expect!

Are independent ministries of value? An organization's independence does not make it bad or good, holy or unholy! All, members, leaders, and organizations (church operated or independent) that contribute to hastening our Lord's return should be reinforced and supported, while those weakening the church and distracting from heaven's mission must be properly dealt with according to God's plan.

It hurts to see division in our churches and members deceived by attack and innuendo, when what we need is to fall at the cross with broken hearts, more concerned with sharing the good news of salvation than imposing our personal agenda and convictions on the church.

I appeal to all to "press together, press together, press together." I ask you to join hands with me in seeking the Lord and finishing the work.



INDIAN OCEAN DIVISION
GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

May 25, 1992

MAY 29 1992

Elder Robert L. Dale, Vice President
North American Division
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, Maryland 209-6600

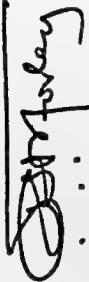
Dear Elder Dale:

RE: INFORMATION ON HOPE INTERNATIONAL

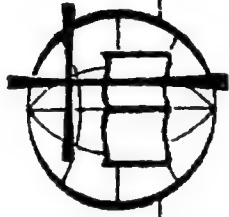
Several of our AID office workers received the reading materials as well as some workers from West African Union and Nigeria Union Missions. No report has been received of any personal visit by Ron Spear or others from the organization.

May God continue to help and guide in this very important task.

Sincerely yours,


Jacob J. Norrey
President

:dam



GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Eastern Africa Division

P.O. BOX 103 100, HIGHLANDS (HARARE), ZIMBABWE, AFRICA CORNER ENTERPRISE ROAD AND PRINCCESS DRIVE
TELEPHONE: 75151/7515 • TELEFAX: 7515 • TELETYPE: 26445

5 June 1992

Elder Robert L. Dale, Secretary
North American Division
FAX No: 301 680 6464

Dear Elder Dale:

Warmest Christian greetings from the Eastern Africa Division!

I am happy to inform you that, at the present, we do not seem to be sending any more of our division by Elder Spear is still sending "Our Firm Foundation" to our workers in the English. This paper throughout our fields in recent months. We have no human way of stopping this paper from reaching our people. We, however, do not feel that the "Our Firm Foundation" has negatively affected our workers. They know the person who is sending the paper and many do not seem to bother to read it.

Whatever study papers you may send concerning these Independent Ministries will assist in enlightening the issues for our people.

Very sincerely yours,


Bekele Heye
President

BH:dot

T-561 P.01

FROM FED 65 2534009

APR 27 '92 16:55 TO 3016806624

Oct. 13 '42 13:46 0000 EUD BERNE SWITZ. TEL 031446266



FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

Far Eastern Division
Fax Number - 011 (65) 253 4009

Date: April 27, 1992

To: Robert Dale, Vice President, N A D

Fax No.: 301 680 6464

From: O C Edwards

Number of Pages Including Cover Page one

MESSAGE:

In answer to your fax about Ron Spear and Hope International we can give the following statements from the Far Eastern Division.

1. This organization has not had much impact here except for the copies of "Our Firm Foundation" which seem to be distributed quite extensively.
2. Ron Spear has stopped here on occasion as he was passing through. Usually it has been to visit some person. He has had very few speaking appointments.
3. He has been invited by a group of laymen to speak at a campmeeting to be held in Malaysia during August of this year. We are in the process of trying to persuade the laymen to cancel his visit.
4. One of our employees, Russell Standish, has published an article in "Our Firm Foundation" entitled, "Crisis." This article has been critical of the Church and of leadership.

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS
EURO-AFRICA DIVISION

SCHOSSHALDENSTRASSE 17, 3008 BERNE, SWITZERLAND

**FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION
FAX NUMBER 31-446266**

DATE: May 19, 1992
TO: Robert L. Dale - North American Division - Fax n° 001 301 680 6464
FROM: E. Ludescher
Total number of pages transmitted: 1.

RE: INFORMATION ON HOPE INTERNATIONAL - YOUR FAX OF MAY 18.

There have been no activities of Ron Spear in our Division territory. Only one year and a half ago he was invited by a dissident group in Berlin. But there was no harmful result for our church.

POSTAL ADDRESS:
P.O. BOX 219
CH-3000 BERNE NP
TEL. 031/44 62 62
FAX 031/44 62 66
TELEX 912 500 EUD



General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists



INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION

760 PONCE DE LEON BOULEVARD • CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA 33134 • P.O. BOX 140760 • MIAMI, FLORIDA 33114-0760
PHONE (305) 443-7471, FAX (305) 441-1814, TELEX 441646 • CABLE "ADVENTIST" MIAMI

FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION
(305) 442-7138

DATE: May 21, 1991 FAX # North American Division
ATTENTION: Pastor Robert Dale
FROM: Pastor George W. Brown

This transmission consists of 2 page(s) including this one

Subject: Hope International

In response to your fax concerning information on Hope International as it affects Inter-America, I can advise you that as of now, we have not had any major or significant confrontation with this organization. However, we have several nagging concerns about the objectives of the leadership of Hope International in our Division.

This far, the profile of this organization has been somewhat low. Leadership of the church throughout the Division, however, have had a nagging concern about the attempts of Hope International to gain a foothold in the Division. Some of the areas that concern us are as follows:

1. The distribution of our Firm Foundation. This magazine is fairly widely circulated in several areas of our Division territory. Until recently, it only came to the English-speaking fields, but within recent times, the material has been translated into Spanish and is being circulated among some of our Spanish-speaking brethren.
2. Ron Spear has made frequent visits to Nicaragua, offering financial assistance to several workers and students. An attempt was also made to establish a school and clinic on property which Hope International secured only a few yards away from our secondary school in Nicaragua. Since a personal appeal made by me to Ron Spear on this matter, I have not heard of any further movements in the direction of establishing these facilities in Nicaragua.
3. During 1992 Ron Spear has made several unauthorized visits to Colombia, Venezuela and Puerto Rico. During these visits he has

TEL:

May 21, 92 14:06 No.021

conducted meetings with a few disgruntled Seventh-Day Adventists as well as a few workers who have been disfellowshipped for various reasons. Attempts have also been made to try and get admission to preach in some of our churches. Because of the firm position of the leadership of the church, this has not been generally realized.

4. One of the problems we presently face in Inter-America with respect to Hope International, is the fact that its leader continues to enjoy church membership in the SDA church in North America. Several workers, local church leaders and church members, have found it difficult to understand how they could successfully prevent Ron Spear from speaking in our churches while he continues to hold membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They would find it very easy to deny him admission if he were not holding membership. This element makes it somewhat difficult for leadership to persuade church members that Ron Spear should not be allowed to speak in our churches.

While as of now, the acceptance of Ron Spear within our Division is not enthusiastic, yet his continued effort to brainwash our believers with his literature and his periodic unauthorized visits, are matters of concern to the leadership of the church as we face the future. While we are very grateful that Hope International has not significantly impacted our Division as of now, we are anxious that measures be taken to neutralize his influence and limit the possibility of wider influence on his part within our territory.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W BROWN
President



General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists



INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION

760 PONCE DE LEON BOULEVARD • CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA 33134 • P.O. BOX 140760 • MIAMI, FLORIDA 33114-0760
PHONE (305) 443-7471, FAX (305) 442-7138, TELEX 441646 • CABLE "ADVENTIST" MIAMI

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

August 5, 1992

Pastor Bob Dale, Vice-President
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, Maryland 20904-6600

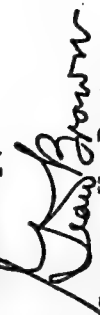
Dear Bob:

A few days ago, on my return to office from an itinerary, I was shocked, almost to speechlessness, when my secretary informed of your call in regards to Ron Spear. This was incomprehensible. My secretary promptly faxed a message to the president of the Central American Union requesting an immediate response.

Enclosed please find the full story of what actually took place. I have translated all the correspondence into English for your benefit. However, I am also enclosing the original Spanish letters in the event that they are needed. The documents speak for themselves, but should you require any further information, don't hesitate to contact me.

It is important to note that Ron Spear has never indeed in fact held membership in Nicaragua. What he has done is misuse a letter he had deceptively obtained from the then conference president. The letter was not a letter of transfer but an identification that could be used for immigration purposes in Nicaragua. This clearly indicates that Ron will stoop to anything to accomplish his purposes.

Sincerely,


George W. Brown
President

GWB:gia

13-92 15:34 3503 2 72004 ADRA/CASA NICA. --- INTER AMER. DIV.

TRANSLATION OF ATTACHED LETTER

Managua, July 31, 1992

Esteemed pastor Brown:

Kindly accept the fraternal greetings of your friend and servant who wishes that God may guide always in your leadership of the church in Inter-America.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that on January 14, 1991 while I was president of the Nicaragua Mission of Seventh-day Adventists, I received two visits from pastor Ron Spear. Since I did not have full information concerning this pastor, I prepared a letter with the intention that at some time in the future he would become a member of our church since this is the request that he had previously made. My understanding was that with my letter he would supposedly secure the needed documentation to become a member by transfer to another church. This (transfer of membership) was never secured. Today, almost two years since this incident, we are now discovering that he (Ron Spear) is utilizing the letter that I had written to deceive people in believing that he is a member of our church in Nicaragua. We wish to categorically reject this falsehood since he never complied with the requirements requested for membership transfer.

On the other hand, I personally want to apologize to you because I recognize that I committed a big error by writing the letter; I don't want to take refuge in the situation in which we were living at that time; I just accept that it was an error on my part. God knows my intentions and I know He will forgive me.

We have spoken with pastor González (the Union president) and he has counseled me and explained the problem that presently exist with respect to pastor Ron Spear. Now that I have a clean picture of the situation, it is totally different from what it appeared to be two years ago when we thought he (Ron Spear) was in good and regular standing in the church. But we now know the facts and therefore want to express to you our support and thank you for your cooperation and understanding concerning the painful incident.

Thanks and may God bless you.

Sincerely,

RAMIRO TORUÑO GOMEZ

Managua, Julio 31, 1992.

Pastor
George Brown
Presidente División Interamericana
Adventista del Séptimo Día
Miami, Florida USA
Su despacho.-

Estimado Pastor Brown:

Reciba usted un saludo fraterno de su amigo y servidor, quien desea que Dios lo guíe siempre en la dirección de la Iglesia de Interamerica.

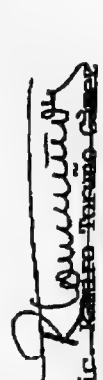
El motivo de esta carta es para informarle que el 14 de Enero de 1991, siendo éste servidor Presidente de la Misión Adventista en Nicaragua y habiendo recibido la visita en dos ocasiones del pastor Ron Spear; por desconocer toda la información sobre dicho pastor, elabore una carta con la intención de que él en un futuro fuese miembro de nuestra Iglesia ya que esa era la solicitud que él nos había hecho y que con la carta que yo le hice supuestamente él conseguiría la documentación que se necesita para hacerse miembro o trasladado a otra Iglesia; cosa que nunca se consiguió y hoy casi dos años de ese incidente nos hemos dado cuenta que él está utilizando la carta que yo hice para engañar a la gente diciendo que es miembro de nuestra Iglesia en Nicaragua; cosa que - desmentimos categóricamente ya que él no cumplió con los requisitos solicitados.

Por otra parte yo personalmente quiero disculparme ante usted porque reconozco que cometí un error grande al haber elaborado la carta; no quiero ampararme en la situación que estábamos viviendo en el momento, simplemente creo que fue un error de mi parte y Dios sabe mis intenciones y sabrá perdonarme.

Hemos hablado con el Pastor González y él me ha aconsejado y explicado el problema que existe hoy día con el pastor Spear y hoy teniendo el cuadro bien claro es totalmente diferente a lo que era hace dos años atrás, donde pensábamos que él estaba en buena regla con la Iglesia pero ya nos dimos cuenta que nos es así y por lo tanto queremos ratificar a usted el apoyo y agradecerle su cooperación y comprensión sobre éste penoso incidente.

Muchas gracias, que Dios lo bendiga.

Atentamente,


Lic. Ramiro Toruño Gómez
DIRECTOR NACIONAL
ADRA/NICARAGUA

08/03/92 09:23 UNION CENTROAMERICANA, COSTA RICA 005
 07/31/92 10:08 3503 2 72004 Tel Nro Jul 31, 92 11:25 No 0001 P.01
 ADRA/CASA NICA.

TRANSLATION OF ATTACHED LETTER

To: Pastor Aristides González
 President, Central American Union

From: Pastor Ramiro Toruño Gomez
 Director, ADRA NICARAGUA

Subject: Membership of pastor Ron Spear

Esteemed Pastor González:

By means of this letter I am sending you copy of the letter which I wrote on behalf of the Nicaragua Mission of SDA in 1991 as a written statement on behalf of Ron Spear and his family. As a matter of fact, in the statement it is indicated that they were accepted as members of our church here in Nicaragua. The truth is, however, that this letter was written with the understanding that he and his family would send us, through the church in the US where they hold membership, the documentation and information required for a transfer of membership. The fact is that this was never done and we have never received the information needed to effect a transfer for him and his family. If he is using the letter in question to say that he is a member of the church in Nicaragua, I reject this as falsehood since there is no record anywhere that certifies that Ron Spear has been accepted as a member based on the receipt of the documents he was asked to supply.

The letter he is using has no validity since he knows that by verbal agreement and by request of Ron Spear himself, with the said letter he would speed up the transfer process in the church where he supposedly has membership. It was based on this verbal agreement that this letter was given to him, with a view to follow the procedure of the world Adventist church.

Sincerely,

(Signature of R. Toruño)

xc: Pastor Miguel Adonia

ADRA

NICARAGUA

Agencia
 de Desarrollo
 y Recursos
 Administrativos
 Adventistas

Avenida 2903
 Managua
 Nicaragua
 Tels. 78-0846
 78-7438
 Fu. 78-7459

Para :

Pr. Aristides González
 Presidente Unión Centroamericana
 de los Adventistas del Séptimo día.

De :

Pr. Ramiro Toruño Gómez
 Director ADRA/Nicaragua.

Asunto :

Feligresía del Pastor Ron Spear

Estimado pastor González:

A través de la presente le estoy enviando copia de la carta que en el año 1991, hice en nombre de la Misión Adventista de Nicaragua, como constancia a favor del pastor Ron Spear y su familia. Realmente en la constancia hace indicar que ellos fueron aceptados como miembros de nuestra Iglesia aquí en Nicaragua, pero la verdad es que esa carta se hizo con el entendido que él y ellos mandarían de la Iglesia, donde son miembros en USA toda la documentación e información requerida para un traslado de feligresía, cosa que nunca se hizo y nosotros nunca recibimos la información para tomar el acuerdo que lo legalizaría a él y ellos como miembros de nuestra Iglesia; si él está usando dicha carta para decir que es miembro de la Iglesia en Nicaragua, yo desmienta tal aseveración ya que no existe ningún registro que diga que Ron Spear ha sido aceptado como miembro habiendo recibido toda la documentación que se le pidió.

La carta que él maneja no tiene validez ya que él sabe que por acuerdo verbal y por solicitud de Ron Spear que con esta carta él agilizaría los trámites en la Iglesia donde supuestamente tiene su feligresía fue que se le concedió tal carta, para fines aclaratorios y buena marcha de la obra Adventista Mundial.

Atentamente,

R. Toruño

RTG/nap.

cc: Pr. Miguel Adonia

FAX TRANSMISSION

TRANSLATION OF ATTACHED LETTER

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Through this medium, the Nicaragua Adventist Mission certifies that we have agreed to receive by transfer, as members of the Mission, the following persons:

1. Ron Spear
2. Betty Spear
3. Jack Kendall
4. Judy Kendall
5. John Kendall
6. Teresa Kendall
7. Sherely Kendall

All of these hold North American nationality. They are desirous of collaborating in the work of preaching the Gospel. For legal purposes we extend to them this written statement.

Granted in the city of Managua, on the 14th day of January, nineteen hundred and ninety one.

Pastor Ramiro Toruño Gómez
President

Nicaragua

Ciudad No. 92 Managua, Nicaragua. Tel. 50174



A QUIEN CONCIERNE

Por este medio la Misión Adventista de Nicaragua, hace constar que hemos aceptado recibir por traslado como miembros de la iglesia de la Misión a las siguientes personas:

1. Ron Spear
2. Betty Spear
3. Jack Kendall
4. Judy Kendall
5. John Kendall
6. Teresa Kendall
7. Sherely Kendall

Todos ellos de Nacionalidad Norteamericana, y desearos de colaborar en la Obra de la predicación del Evangelio y para fines legales, extendemos esta constancia.

Dado en la ciudad de Managua a los catorce días del mes de Enero del año mil novecientos noventa y uno.

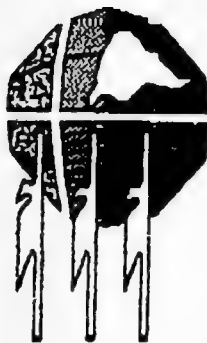
Atentamente,

Ramiro Toruño Gómez
Pr. Ramiro Toruño Gómez
Presidente

cc: Archivo
02*

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APR 22 1992



F A X

April 16, 1992

TO: ROBERT L. DALE
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION
(301) 680-8455 64

FROM: JOAO WOLFF, PRESIDENT
SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION

Up to this date we have not heard that Ron Spear has visited any part of the SAD's territory, causing difficulties. If and when this happens we will immediately advise you of it.

May the Lord continue operating in your favor as you discharge your responsibilities.

JW/wh
0416JW

August 19, 1991

FACSIMILE

TO: ROBERT L DALE
AT: NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION
RE: RON SPEAR
PAGES: 1

The South Pacific Division was not at all happy with the attitudes of Ron Spear when he came into our field. He indicated a conviction that it was appropriate for him to receive tithes for the support of his work, and he showed a complete lack of understanding of the damage his work was doing to our publishing work. We have been very concerned at his active conscription of our literature evangelists, a number of whom left our work to sell his books.

Those who continue to represent his work in Australia and New Zealand have created a lot of confusion and division, and we could well do without it.

Yours sincerely

FROM: ATHAL TOLHURST

SIGNATURE: *L. Maywald*

Seventh-day Adventist Church
South Pacific Division
148 Fox Valley Road
Wahroonga, NSW 2076, Australia
Telephone: (02) 469 7122

Cables: "Adventist", Sydney
Admin. Facsimile: (02) 469 1713
Telex: AA 22064

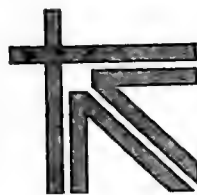
Administration

485 1713
J.F. 01
L. Maywald
(018)

FIVE

2 June, 1992

JUN 09 1992



Seventh-day Adventist Church
South Pacific Division
148 Fox Valley Road
Wahroonga, NSW 2076, Australia
Telephone: (02) 489 7122

Facsimile: (02) 489 0943
International Facsimile: 61 2 489 0943
Telex: AA 22064
Cables: "Adventist", Sydney

Pastor Robert Dale
Vice President
General Conference
Seventh-day Adventist Church
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-1608
U.S.A.

Dear Pastor Dale,

RE: INFORMATION ON HOPE INTERNATIONAL

I am the secretary for Pastor John Gate, who is the Ministerial Association Secretary for our South Pacific Division. Two weeks ago we had our mid-year meetings. At the end of those meetings, Dr. Bryan Ball, our President, gave Pastor Gate your fax of May 18, because Dr. Ball left on an itinerary. Since Pastor Gate also had to leave on an itinerary, he had asked me to gather the information you require.

I have been in touch with each of our eleven conference presidents, but it has taken until now to get a response from them, because all of them were taking part in the union meetings which followed our mid-year meetings.

I have received answers from all of our presidents now - most of them not being able to give information. Some of them would be able to get evidence to you if they had more time to make inquiries. These conferences are the Southern Australian Conference and the North New Zealand Conference.

The little information that I was able to gather, I will include copies of with this letter. Our department itself has quite a bit material on "Hope International", "Our Firm Foundation" and "Ron Spear", of which you will also find copies included.

I am terribly sorry that this answer has taken so long, but as you will have realised from the above, it was not possible to get it to you earlier.

Hoping that the enclosed material will be of help to you, I do remain with

Christian greetings,

Beate Karbstein
MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION

bk
encl.

cc: Dr. Bryan Ball

MINUTES OF FOURTH MEETING OF THE
56TH SESSION OF THE

SOUTH NEW ZEALAND CONFERENCE OF THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
23 OCTOBER 1989, SAMOAN CHURCH HALL, CHRISTCHURCH

9.00AM

WELCOME:

Mr B Lawty welcomed the delegates to the Session and opened the meeting with prayer and the singing of Hymn no.12 'Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee'

DEVOTIONAL:

Pastor H G Harker, shared with the delegates the promise of God to pour out His Spirit as he did in Peters' time in Pentecost. At that time the Spirit of God was felt, and God is just as willing to do for us today what he did for the people at Pentecost. Pastor Harker went on to relate encouraging experiences and reports from his time at the Annual Council of the General Conference. 'If God be for us, who can be against us?'

CONFIRMATION OF
MINUTES OF THIRD
MEETING OF SESSION:

VOTED that the minutes of the Third meeting of the Session be adopted.

HOPE INTERNATIONAL:

VOTED that a clear and concise statement including points of clarification from Pastor A H Tolhurst be issued to all Church members stating that this Church does not support, in any way Hope International or any other groups which do not have the official support of the Church.
FURTHER that members of Hope International be encouraged to direct their energies to support the work of the Church.

FURTHER RECOMMENDATION
FROM THE NOMINATING
COMMITTEE:

Whereas Mrs L Woolley declined to accept nomination to the Executive Committee it was VOTED to accept the name of Miss S Mulitalo as a member of the Executive Committee.

The meeting recessed at 11.00am.

The meeting resumed at 11.05am with prayer by Mr H Kipa.

'92 05/25 17:10

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NR CONF SDA TU

3

Pr Ron Spear
Page 2
5 June 1990

5 June 1990

Pastor Ron Spear
Editor
Our Firm Foundation
P O Box 940
ETONVILLE WA98328
USA

Dear Ron,

Recently I received two publications from your organization, Hope International. I was quite amazed to read on page 3, "Hope International is a special ministry assisting in the God given work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church".

I would like to personally indicate to you that I do not believe the truthfulness of this statement on the basis of my recent four years experience in church administration in the North New Zealand Conference. During that time I gained the very distinct impression from the activities of Hope International within that conference, that Hope International had no concern whatsoever for or with the work and activities of the Seventh-day Adventist Church organization.

You may claim that there has been a shift in the methods and purpose of Hope International over the years. And it may be your personal intent to have Hope International "assisting in the God given work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church". However, in the light of my personal experience with your organization the only way I will personally believe this to be true is to have the official organizations of the church make such a statement. In all our publications that we have from General Conference down I have not seen one official church publication indicate that Hope International does perform a very valid assistance to the work and development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

I was further surprised to see the second publication especially printed for those leaders who would be attending the next General Conference Session. My doubts about the truthfulness of your statement in Plim Foundation is only substantiated by the publication of this book 'At The Crossroads'. Our church manual clearly indicates to us on page 130, "Any church or conference officer or leader, attempting to control the votes of a group of delegates would be considered disqualified for holding office". While you may not be a conference

or church officer, or a leader, and while you may not be particularly wishing to control votes on a particular issue, nonetheless, the very act of printing this special message for the delegates of the General Conference very clearly in my mind breaks the spirit of the direction that our church manual has given to the family of the church. This further indicates your disloyalty to the Seventh-day Adventist organization structure.

I have discussed these concerns with my fellow officer in this conference and we wish you to know that we do not accept your claims of credibility with the church organization just simply because you print them. From reading the content of your magazine and from the fruits of those who have visited the North New Zealand Conference under the representation of Hope International, and from the publication of a special booklet for the delegates attending the General Conference, we want you to know that we do not accept your written claims to be truthful.

If you do have the desire to make a reply, please include a written indication from the General Conference department, that has been especially established to give credibility and validity to independent ministries, making a statement that particularly declares Hope International as being a valid supportive ministry to the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I will in response further struggle with my convictions which have come from what I have read and personally experienced from your representatives.

I have long prayed for and hoped to see the day when all independent ministries will in fact be -

1. Genuine, well balanced Seventh-day Adventists.
2. Loyal to the organization and structure of the church that God Himself has given to us.

Sincerely yours,

D D Blanch
PRESIDENT

DDB:hw

Copy to - Pr Harold Harker

November 12, 1987
Re: Independent printing of E.G. White books

Let me explain. In regards to the matter of independent publishing of her books, she refuses to do so in order not to throw discredit upon the publishing houses, see PM p.121. Then she urges unity, see PM p.122. "Let the idea of unity be the key note of all your actions..... Let your whole influence be cast to create a spirit of unity with the men who are carrying responsibilities in the publishing work." PM p.122.

So unity and cooperation seems to be her whole thrust in the matter. She was upholding the work of our publishing houses inspite of what took place. Ron, can you imagine that Ellen White would feel, act and write differently today?

Today there is no blocking in the publishing of E.G. White titles in anyway. Paperback E.G. White titles have been published by the hundreds of thousands, and are still available. The same for paperback, cheap editions of 'Bible Readings'. So what you mean when you say that you have tried to persuade the American House to give you economical E.G. White books, needs further explanation, because cheap paperback E.G. White titles are available. Right! They are offered to our literature evangelists all the time, not only to literature evangelists but to all churchmembers.

When more are needed, let us talk to our publishing houses and get them printed. What you are doing is taking things out of their hands into your own, which is positively against the writings and spirit of Ellen White. She was not prepared to set an example in that direction, for where this is done it creates disunity and discredit to our SDA publishing houses. This is what is happening right now.

Ron I am very, very sad to say, but this is what is reported to me, that currently under the influence of people on the side of C.Wheeling, and on your side, are going around talking against our leading brethren, talking against our publishing house, visiting our colporteurs and confusing their minds, even to visiting new colporteur recruits and confusing them. The result is, colporteurs are leaving our ranks and going back to secular labor, and new recruits are changing their minds and not joining the literature ministry but staying in their secular labor. Ron, I do not think that is what you are aiming at, but nevertheless it is happening. Instead of supporting, it is undermining.

This is also why I cannot harmonise with the policies of "Hope International". I read in "Our Firm Foundation" vol.2 No 8, August '87 page 21:-

"In summary, our purpose is to support the divinely ordained mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to bring the gospel to all the world. Our mission is not to tear down or destroy the work of the Church, but to uphold it and help build it up along the lines that God has directed."

Currently we do not see that independent ministries are supporting and upholding the work of the church. I believe what Ellen White says, that the canvassing work is "God ordained" CM.p.6.. Why then go and visit colporteurs engaged in this work and discourage them?

SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION OF

THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

148 FOX VALLEY ROAD, WAHROONGA, N.S.W. 2076 • AUSTRALIA
PHONE: 489 7122 • CABLES: "ADVENTIST" SYDNEY • TELEX: 22064

November 12, 1987

Pastor R.D. Spear

Dear Ron,

Thank you very much for your letter of September 16'87 in answer to my letter dated August 3'87. Never would I have thought that a time would come, when we as friends would be at variance on church matters. From the days we worked together in Tanzania and collaborated in the work of God which we both love very much, we felt that unity was binding us together. At least these have been my feelings. That unity I have always felt was based upon a common understanding of scripture and the testimonies. Now it appears that we are diverting.

Ron, my first letter was a personal one, however from now on I have to write from my office and involve our division president in the matter as well. I trust you will respect that. This does not mean that I have closed my eyes to the weaknesses of the church and its shortcomings. However inspite of that we must preserve unity and the spirit of working together. Our shortcomings show that we still have a work to do and are not perfect, or faultless yet.

I agree with you in everything Ellen G. White has written, but does that mean that we have to take the reigns into our own hands, thus not letting the Lord lead in these matters?

You know as well as I do, that Ellen White in her days, had her troubles with brethren, but inspite of that, always pressed for unity. When "Great Controversy" was held back from being printed, for which she criticized the brethren (see Publishing Ministry page 207), she still refused to support the independent printing of her books. When a contract was placed before her and she was almost ready to sign, she changed her mind and refused to place her signature. An angel prevented her from doing so. Ron you know the story as revealed in Publishing Ministry page 208.

It is only since the 50 years copyright of her books has lapsed that independent persons have started to print and distribute her books outside our denominational publishing houses. But are we right to take advantage of the 50 years lapsing of copyright to print these books independently, and distribute them independently, thus violating the written counsel of Ellen White and working against her counsel. Doing so creates a situation about which Ellen White has given warning.

November 12, 1987

Re: Independent printing of E.G. White books

If something is currently wrong with the Australian colporteur work which causes Colin Martins director of "Amazing Truths" to set up colporteur training schools, why not first approach the leadership of the Australian literature ministry and point out the mistakes made in training and executing the literature ministry. Is this in support of the unity of the church and supporting its ordained mission? We are open to listen to criticism, but we are not in favor of criticism behind our back, and watching the setting up of a counter program. This is not the way brethren in Christ work together for a common cause.

In your letter you criticize the current selling of health books 'by a man who we could not even say is an Adventist'.

Ron, have you ever tried to get information from the division office as to why we are currently selling health books? Do you know that with many health book sets, we sell a message book? Do you know that such colporteurs who are now discouraged from selling health books, are now selling less message books? Do you know the facts yourself as to who wrote these health books? Have you been informed from the division office, regarding this Doctor in order to get your second or third hand information correct? Have you or your supporters ever tried to make a 100% living out of selling only and solely, E.G. White books, as a full-time door-to-door activity, and that in a country which is listed as non-Christian by united nation standards? Is it known to you that some of the supporters of your ideas are in fact unemployed, living off the government dole money and going door-to-door with E.G. White books, drawing some commission on these books, but not reporting this sideline income to the Social Security office?

Would it not be far better, if yourself, Colin Martins and others, who think they have found a better way of executing the divinely ordained canvassing work, and have found better ways of training colporteurs than those who have done it for forty and more years, approach the division leadership, first putting their cards on the table, discussing matters properly in a spirit of seeking unity and harmony, rather than going ahead, by-passing the Wairoonga office and setting up a new organisation, new training schools etc., and thus creating confusion, disunity, disharmony and a spirit of criticism among both workers and churchmembers alike.

Ron, if you are the same Ron Spears my former Tanzanian friend and fellow missionary who I knew from former days, then the writing of this letter must make you very sad, as it does me. You must realise that something is developing which you are not aiming at. But there is still time to change this.

You write that you are coming in March 1988 with a group of men, and that you would like to discuss matters. You are most welcome to see me as a friend and I will take you to our mountain dwelling in Springwood. As far as Church business is concerned I suggest the following.-

That Colin Martins, yourself and two others are invited to come to Wairoonga and meet with myself, a division officer, our Publishing house manager and the Trans-Tasman Union Conference publishing department director. Let us know as soon as possible if this is acceptable to you, so a date can be arranged.

-3-

November 12, 1987

Re: Independent printing of E.G. White books

You and your group are invited to put on the table, criticism in respect of our current operation of the colporteur ministry in our division and the operations of the Signs Publishing Company.

We will have questions regarding your reasons for starting colporteur training schools, the visiting of our colporteur and recruits, the importation and distribution of independently produced E.G. White books outside Seventh-day Adventist Publishing houses.

It has become a rather long letter, but to explain matters correctly I have found this necessary.

God bless, greetings to both yourself and Betty.

Sincerely yours,

J.T. Knopper
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR

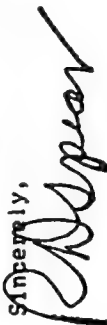
.mjm

c.c. W.R.L. Scragg
c.c. C. Martin

I'll be coming back to Australia next March, to hold some meetings, with a group of men that I will be bringing with me. I hope that we can meet and talk together at that time.

I hope that you understand my position, Jan, but I believe, without a question, that these books must go as the leaves of autumn, as God has commissioned.

Must close for now.

Sincerely,


Ron Spear

RS:jk

28 SEP 1987

Hope International
Box 940
Eatonville, WA 98328
(206) 832-6602

September 16, 1987

Jan K. Knopper
148 Fox Valley Rd.
Wahroonga, N.S.W. 2076
Australia

Dear Jan,

Your letter of August 3rd is at hand. I appreciate your counsel and your concern. We are familiar with all that material that you sent us. I think that we have to see that we have reached a very unusual hour. We find that between the Pacific Press and the Review and Herald, last year, only 25,000 message books went out to the world. I believe that we have reached the time we were told would come, when God said that He would take the reins into His own hands and that He is calling men from the plow and every walk of life to take that message. (*Counsel's on Health*, 395 and *Testimonies*, vol. 9, 96.)

Why did God inspire Ellen White to say that there would be very few great men among us when the work finishes? Why did she have to write that those who had leaned on science, falsely so called, would not be leaders then? She then goes on in *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 81 and gives us a description of the people who will take the place of those leaders. I think that we have to see that the tremendous shaking of Adventism is almost complete. When it is done, we will be amazed at those who then stand at the head of rank and file, in that day.

No body has tried harder than I have, Jan, to bring economical books into this denomination. I think that we see we are barely marking time, which is no way to finish the work. These books must go "like the leaves of autumn." Ellen White was inspired to say this, and by God's grace, we are going to do this. We are going to print them by the millions and while I know it may possibly cause some confusion, when God sends a message to the church, it has always caused a problem, and the men who brought it always got themselves in serious trouble, even to the point of martyrdom. As we move to the end, Ellen White makes it clear, those who bear the message to the end, will pay for it with their lives. Look at Revelation 20:4, and also *Maranatha*, 199. I think that what we see ahead of us, is that those who stand and are ready to be counted, will suffer persecution. (2 Timothy 3:12)

So far as the book business there is concerned, we see very few message books going out in Australia and New Zealand. It is mostly the health books, which are authored by a man who we could not even say is an Adventist! This is not really bringing the saving message to the world, and so, we already have books on the water to New Zealand and Australia. We are going to set up an organization in each place to try and bring those message books out in volume! I know that this will possibly make you unhappy, but I believe that we have a commission from a high source, one we must follow, even if it causes a problem among friends, which I hope will not be the case.

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GENERAL CONFERENCE OF



THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
TRANS-EUROPEAN DIVISION

181 MT. PETER STREET ST. ALBANS, HERTFORDSHIRE ENGLAND AL1 1EY
Telephone (0727) 800001 Cable: ADVENTIST ST ALBANS Herts ENGLAND (0727) 800001

TELEFAX TO:

ROBERT L DALE
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION
301 680 6464

19TH MAY, 1992

RE: HOPE INTERNATIONAL

Ron Spear has not in person brought great difficulties to our Division. He has been, I believe, twice to Britain and he met with separated groups. These groups have, however, much stronger ties to the Standish brothers. Spear's publication "Our Firm Foundation" and various cassette tapes are, of course, in wide circulation. Similarly, in the Netherlands, gatherings of separated persons are being regularly visited by the Standishes and others.

JAN PAULSEN, PRESIDENT, TED

TELEFAX TO:

ROBERT L DALE
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

301 680 6464

22ND MAY, 1992

I had no sooner than sent you word to say that Ron Spear had not personally been involved in Independent Ministries in Britain, than I received the list of speakers who are meeting with the Gazely Bible Fellowship in England. On the list of speakers are:

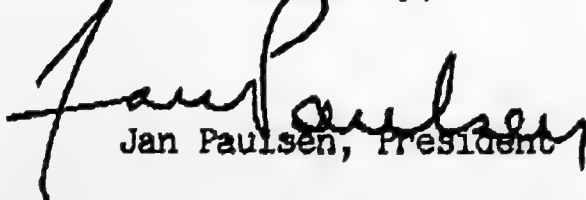
Colin Standish
Ray De Carlo
Hal Mayer
Ron Spear
Clark Floyd

I notice also that they are announcing that a baptism will be held in connection with their gathering. To my knowledge none of the above holds current ministerial credentials. I have asked the conference president to advise the local organisations of that. I also understand that after the gathering in England they are going to something similar in Holland.

If you have any information to share with me about Ray de Carlo and Clark Floyd, I would be glad to receive word from you.

With best wishes, I am,

Yours sincerely,


Jan Paulsen, President

JP/hn

Voted: that serious consideration be given to recommending to the church (at business meeting that anyone who supports the Gazeley Bible Fellowship, or any similar organization, either by PROMOTING or ATTENDING its meetings, thus giving evidence that he or she agrees with the teachings and attitudes of the GBF, should be disfellowshipped from the church.

It is our sincere wish and prayer that the reasons for such a recommendation will be understood, and that you will choose to be loyal to the church. We recognize that not everyone who has attended the GBF meetings in the past has been aware of the subversive activity of some of its members. This letter should serve to inform such people and prompt them to enquire further. We would hate to see you "stranded" and disillusioned when the GBF eventually peters out.

May the Lord bless you as you decide to unite with the whole church in witnessing to the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and His soon Coming - to expend your efforts in "outreach" rather than in "inreach".

Yours sincerely,
on behalf of the Norwich Church Board,

[signature]

D.C. Clothier,
Pastor

N.B. This information is also being handed to GBF personnel who do not have membership at the Norwich church. Although the matter of disfellowshipment does not apply, such people will be asked to stay away from the church until a more cooperative spirit is manifested.

cc Pastor C.R. Perry.

Norwich SDA Church
6th June 1991.

Gazeley Bible Fellowship Members

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

The Norwich church board has spent time in prayer and in discussion on the important matter of "outreach"; the God-given task of reaching out to people who do not know Jesus Christ or the glorious message for these last days. There is, however, one overriding obstacle to this, and it is the lack of unity in our church at Norwich. We regret that a prominent member of the Gazeley Fellowship, whose membership is at Norwich, declined an invitation to meet with the board this week.

Those of us who have heard the sermons preached at the GBF, and who have read their official publications, are disturbed by their flagrant condemnations of church leadership and regular ministers; (they give the impression that they feel they have a God-given right to do this, while still claiming to be part of that same ministry). (attached)

It appears to us that this is the main objective of the GBF leadership whether national or foreign; we are bound to believe, therefore, that those who attend these meetings must support them in their unmitigated condemnation of the church, the Body of Christ. (Not simply a concern for the church. - attached; Spear sermon).

We do not wish to stand in judgment. Everyone is entitled to his or her own opinion, but our concern is that these negative opinions are being expressed by those who have their membership with the church, and also that these seeds of discontent and negativism are destructive and are the direct cause of the tense atmosphere in the church, as well as the reason why we are unable to invite new people to the church. (Bible test: By their fruits they are known).

As William Johnson writes in the Adventist Review, April 18, referring to certain people who rise up among us with new interpretations:

"Some produce publications; some flourish for a time. They suck into their orbit various types of members, including the earnest but naive, and the disgruntled. Eventually the teacher and his movement fade away. Many of his supporters find their way back to the church, but also some do not - good, sincere people who are now disillusioned".

It is not our intention to doubt the sincerity of those who attend the Gazeley Bible Fellowship, or to question their relationship with their God, but the church board has been elected to tend to the spiritual needs of the church and to cater for its nurturing and growth. This means enjoying a relationship with our Lord (Yes, and rejoicing in His love and Righteousness), and having a deep desire to reach out into the community. And it is this that we are unable to do at present because of the confusion brought about by those who organize, promote and support fringe meetings.

These meetings are being referred to as "house meetings" and are looked on as replicas of the early NT church pattern, and even a fulfilment [sic] of Spirit of Prophecy prediction that at the end of time there will be many such groups meeting in homes with open Bible. (see attached) (Blythe). This can only be a distortion of what we are to expect to happen. Where do we find approval for splitting up our Sabbath morning services, and fragmenting? "Press together" is the message for these times. Of course the Lord wants us to take our Bibles into the homes of neighbors in order to share our faith; that is something we should gladly do, and we have six days of the week for it.

With all this in mind, and also the fact that we have allowed time to pass by with only minimal effort to engage in soul-winning over a long period of time (six years or more), we, the church board, have taken the following action:

Because:

1. the Gazeley Bible Fellowship organization is not authorized by church administration, and its foreign speakers are not sanctioned through normal church channels,
2. it has been proved to be divisive and destructive of church unity, and subversive in its activity inside and outside the church, (proof of lies and misrepresentation against specific ministers is documented on file).
3. those who speak at the GBF meetings engage in direct condemnation of church leadership and ministry, which is destroying the very fabric of the church, as well as undermining its authority and its reason for existence,
4. the official publication for this group also engages in and encourages a critical attitude towards the church, it was:

win souls for the Lord. It is sad indeed if these new converts will not be accorded the same rights and blessings as others. Should there be a kind of first and second class Adventist convert? Would dear sister Ellen White have agreed to such a situation?

As far as I can see the dear folks at Norwich have done nothing to merit the intended action of the Norwich church board. I would therefore urge that our leading brethren both in the United States and Europe would use their influence to avert the measures that are being threatened against these good, sincere, faithful church members, so that justice may be done in God's church, and Christian tolerance continue to bear sway.

Sincerely yours in Christ.

[signature]

Roy D Vesey

Norwich SDA Church
133, Dereham Road,
Norwich

8th July, 1991.

Norwich SDA Members of
Gazeley Bible Fellowship.

Dear Friends,

The Norwich church board has authorized me to inform you of its most recent action. I shall state it and then offer some comments in the form of "Reasons", "Purposes" and "Results". The business meeting referred to will be convened on Tuesday, 30th July at 7.30 p.m. and the action taken is as follows:

Whereas, the Gazeley Bible Fellowship has been proved to be divisive, destructive of church unity, and subversive in its activity inside & outside the church;

Whereas, those who address the GBF meetings engage in unabashed negative criticism of church leadership and ministry, which is destroying the very fabric of the church, as well as undermining its authority (& raison d'être);

Voted: to recommend to the church (business meeting that the following members of the Norwich church, who have given evidence that they agree with the teachings & attitudes of the GBF, be disfellowshipped:

(names on file include . . .

Firstly we wish to mention that according to our church guidelines you have a right to be present at that meeting. We would also point out that the business meeting is a "private" meeting of the church and only Norwich church members will be present.

As pastor of the local church, I would offer the following points for your consideration and prayer:

1. No one takes pleasure in such recommendations; but great happiness would result if you decided to sever all connection with Gazeley Bible Fellowship before 30th July.
2. This measure is not to be regarded as a punitive step, but rather as a remedial or procedural step meant to bring about eventual harmony in the church Body of Christ.
3. Reasons for action: Church Manual, page 160 (No. 7) Adhering to/taking part in a divisive/disloyal movement; (page 155 comments on "Self-appointed Organizations").
4. Purposes of actions: a) To isolate those who rebuke, judge and condemn church leadership, ministry & local officers; (b) to persuade [sic] such people to stay away from the church until a more supportive and cooperative spirit is shown.
5. Results: a) GBF will worship separately; b) The local church will become a haven of peace to its members; c) It will be a more representative place to which to invite people who expect God's church to be united in love.

One other pre-amble might have been included, which would have made reference to the fact that a present there is no "outreach" being planned because of the situation in the church.

We trust you will see the importance of these points and take a positive step towards supportiveness and cooperation with God's church.

Yours sincerely in the Saviour's cause,

[signature of D.C. Clothier]

Copies to:

General Conference of S.D.A.
Trans-European Division.
British Union Conference.
South England Conference.

The Old Rectory,
Gazeley,
Newmarket,
Suffolk,
CB8 8RB
England.

17-7-91

Dear Brother,

I am writing to you as one who was born and brought up an Adventist and who has now reached the age of 56 years. I love the Advent faith, and the Advent church, and my great desire is to see God's last message go to all the world in great power, so that Jesus can come back and take all His children home for all eternity.

Therefore, I am writing to you as one who is very concerned about what is now happening to some of my fellow-brethren here in England who also love God's truth with all their hearts.

Several members of the S.D.A. church at Norwich in the east of England who accept the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy just as it reads, as did the pioneers of the Advent faith, are being threatened with being put out of the church for doing so.

Those who accept the historic positions of the Advent faith should surely not be cast out of the church for this. Also, if they wish to meet together with others who accept the historic teachings of Adventism, in the large family home here of Bro. Humphries, where I also live, then should they not be allowed to do so without threat to their church membership?

Surely, any member of the Adventist church should be free to open [sic] his own home 4 or 5 times a year to invite fellow members to come and study and discuss God's word together without the threat of his church membership being taken away for so doing.

Many folks here testify to what a blessing these meetings are to them, and how they have been strengthened in the faith by attending them, so it is sad that some are under the threat of being disfellowshipped for attending them.

As far as belief and doctrine are concerned, those who meet here at Gazeley believe, for instance, that Christ came to this world taking the fallen nature of Adam upon Him, -the same nature that we have- and not the nature of the unfallen Adam. Leadership here have said that there is room for both views in the church. Then my question is why are those who hold forth the "fallen nature" view treated in the way they are now being treated? Obviously, one can hold to only one view or the other, so why is it that only the "unfallen nature" view is, in practice, officially allowed to be held forth?

Of course, the "fallen nature" teaching leads to the teaching that we can, in the power of Christ, overcome sin as He overcame it, but is this truth not upheld fully in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy? I see no reason in any case to disfellowship those who uphold this view in the church. In any event would it not rather be better, before disfellowshipping good church members, to get the whole church together to study and discuss these matters from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy so that both sides of the question can be clearly put forth for all to hear. This surely is a reasonable suggestion.

Also, another group who get together regularly, study and hold forth the views of Desmond Ford. These meet at Aylsbury. I know of no similar action being taken against members of this group for propagating the Fordite views. Yet Ford himself was defrocked I understand, for propagating his views. I am not trying to say that this group should be disciplined also. I am however, asking that the Gazeley group be afforded the same privileges as the other group. Surely this is only fair and reasonable [sic]

We hear also that in the United States there are also many such groups that meet together to study God's holy word and the precious truths of historic Adventism, and they are free to do so and also retain the privileges of church membership. Why should it be any different here in Great Britain? Some here who attend the Gazeley group meetings are being refused baptism as a result. Why should this be so?

If those who attend the Gazeley meetings go out and win many souls for the truth, which they are often urged to do by ministers and members, why should not the new members have the right to baptism and church membership -a right that has been accorded to all who accept the Advent faith in the past? In spite of this outlook those who come to the Gazeley fellowship meetings are indeed going out to seek and

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17-7-91

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Copies to:
General Conference.
Trans-European Division.
British Union Conference.
South England Conference.

90 Kings Road,
Gosport,
Hants
England.

17 July '91

Dear Elder Folkenberg,

I am a third generation Adventist; my late mother used to be a Bible worker for the church. I am well educated, having a BSc., and at present have my own business, a health food shop. I have been a local church elder.

I wish to draw your attention to the threatened disfellowship of eight members of the Norwich church. Norwich is in East Anglia, in the east of England, and is where I was at University.

Brother and sister Cabbin, and brother and sister Rose, who are threatened with disfellowship [sic], I have known for many years; I have recognised [sic] them to be exemplary Christians, being totally dedicated to Seventh-day Adventism.

Brother Cabbin in particular has given Bible studies to and brought many people into this faith. They are well educated, sister Rose having her own dental practice. They are humble, well-mannered people and are certainly not critical, judgemental [sic], trouble-makers, but in fact have come quietly and patiently over the last few years as they have had preaching credentials and church offices taken away.

I enclose copies of two recent letters they have received. I visited with them recently and they appeared to me to be numb with shock and did not know how to react.

I am therefore writing to you to ask that you use the influence of your office to counsel with the Norwich Church board through the appropriate channels to stop this injustice before it goes any further. Their business meeting dealing with this matter, is due on Tuesday, July 30, 1991.

The two enclosed letters refer to Gazeley Bible Fellowship, so I feel I need to make some comments about this self-supporting ministry which is run by laymen in England. They distribute low-priced Spirit of Prophecy books, and recently had a week for training in hydrotherapy and natural remedies which we hope will be the first of many. They also have Bible fellowship weekends when they have invited speakers from such ministries as Steps To Life; Hope International; Hartland; Light Bearers (which probably accounts for their unpopularity amongst some of the ministers in Britain) as well as speakers from this country. But they have attempted to supplement the work of the regular church, and have been successful in bringing back and establishing into their local churches, many who have been away for years, and have greatly encouraged others who were beginning to grow cold, or who were getting discouraged. They have also worked with and seen non-Adventists baptised [sic].

It is most certainly not a divisive or disloyal ministry. They fully believe and practise [sic] the Seventh-day Adventist faith.

The letter dated July 8, 1991 states that Gazeley has been PROVED to be divisive, etc., but neither letter gives any real evidence to establish this "proof". Where is the evidence? I have heard many allegations in the past, but when I have investigated them, they have proved to be unfounded. (They were said to preach erroneous doctrines; nature of Christ, etc., but where is the evidence? They were said to be critical of leadership, but on investigation they were valid protests against some irregularity or another, and so on.) Surely the loyalty of Gazeley Bible Fellowship to this church's commission needs to be investigated at a higher level than that of a local church?

In conclusion, I would like to suggest a possible solution. It is obvious that the Norwich church board members are very antagonistic to the Gazeley Bible Fellowship. Instead of disfellowshipping the, why do they not encourage them to start a branch Sabbath school, say for a period of a year. This would allow time for tempers to cool, and events to take a more sober course.

Yours Sincerely,

[signature]

G. E. Fordham BSc. (Hons)

Copies to: General Conference.
Trans-European Division.
British Union Conference.
South England Conference.

90 Kings Road,
Gosport,
Hants
PO12 1PZ

17 July 1991

Dear Elder Folkenberg,

I am sister Fordham. I also hold a degree. I feel I should write and tell you what a blessing Gazeley Bible Fellowship has been to me.

I have been a member of the S.D.A. church for 14 years. My family are not S.D.A. Before going to Gazeley I found myself in the Romans 7 position of not wanting to commit certain sins, but falling into them, not knowing how to avoid them. But going to Gazeley I learned how to live the victorious life. An important factor in which, I believe is to claim the promises of God, e.g. 1 Cor 10:13. I pray this every day and God does not let me be tempted beyond that which I am able. I now have the peace and joy of the Lord.

I am not saying I do not do anything wrong, but when I do, I pray about it and the Lord helps me to overcome on whatever point it is. Then the Lord moves me on to the next point. This I believe is sanctification.

I pray that you will work through the appropriate channels to stop the disfellowshipping of brothers and sisters who attend the meetings at Gazeley. These meetings I believe compliment the function of the church and help to strengthen and encourage members in the faith. This has been my own experience.

I know that so called "criticism" has been levelled at church leadership, but I believe that this has been constructive criticism, to help our church leaders to better follow the counsel given by the servant of the Lord. I hope that such encouragement will be accepted in love, as it is given.

God bless you,

Mrs. S.A. Fordham B.A. (Hons)

[signature]

Extracts taken from sermons by Gazeley preachers.

"Unity at What Cost?" R. Blythe:

"We need to help the church to re-discover its old truths; Right? That's what our burden is, and that's what our mission is, and by God's grace etc. . . . I believe this is the beginning of the loud cry. Ellen White looked forward into the future and she said she saw little companies meeting in homes all over the world. And I believe I have seen that begin to take place already . . . Not that we don't want to meet in the churches; we do. I mean, I've been a minister for this church"

(Editor: Does Ellen White support the fragmentation of the existing church?)

"The Everlasting Covenant" R. Spear:

"My wife thinks I'm trying to act like I'm 18 years old. But when you have a commission and a mission from the Lord, you better not sit down too much; you better go. . . . (Joke about travelling with Jesus omitted) We've got a tremendous mission to accomplish. The world is in a horrible condition today, and the church isn't far behind. . . . And it's left with us who understand truth, who are faithful and loyal to God in every detail of our lives, who are looking and longing and praying and pleading with God for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It is left to us now to be able to carry this message to completion. . . ."

(Editor: This is blatant exclusiveness, or even elitism, applied to this group - whether Gazeley or all FF members).

"If I Were the Devil - What would I Do?" - Grossboll

"Satan is interested in soul-winning. . . . in the Adventist church. Ellen White says: Ev. 313: Satan is seeking to crowd into the church all the false brethren that he can. (Editor: Exact quotation in context is: "Great care should be exercised in accepting members into the church; for Satan has his specious devices through which he purposes to crowd false brethren [sic] into the church through whom he can work more successfully to weaken the cause of God." R.&H. 10.1.1893

Grossboll sermon continues: "The sad thing is we are cooperating with him too many times; we are not opposing him at all. We say: Satan, how many you wan' a bring in? I need all I can get in on the church books; I need to have . . . good record this year. God's not helping me; maybe you can. (Editor: These are supposedly words of Adventist ministers - except FF personnel). If the devil were your preacher he would be smooth; the best preacher you've ever heard; he would preach sermons that would just be on love and on righteousness. He would use that word a lot: righteousness by faith. He would talk about righteousness and love. Now I have this from the Bible; I'm going to show you. These are the terms Satan uses; righteousness and love. . . ."

"I want you to know that if I were the devil I wouldn't stop at being a pastor. I'd want to be a pastor of a bigger and bigger church, until I could get into the place where I was the one who was hiring the pastor. (Editor: He now refers to conference presidents). That's where I'd want to be - where I could start hiring the pastors."

"I have noticed our Adventist people and our Adventist churches - had you bring (sic, in this pastor or this pastor . . . And I've found that the pastors, whatever they teach is what the people end up believing after a little while. They have no root, no rock, no grounding. Whatever is taught and whatever is preached is what the majority end up believing."

Bruce Johnston

- 2 -

March 1, 1990

GENERAL
CONFERENCE
OF THE
SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST
CHURCH

NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

March 1, 1990

Elder Bruce Johnston
North Pacific Union
P O Box 16677
Portland OR 97216

Dear Bruce:

You have asked for a letter specifically indicating how the North American Division relates to Hope International.

The attached letter dated March 1, 1990 addressed to "To Whom It May Concern" indicates the position of the North American Division in regard to independent ministries in general.

Individuals have contacted the North American Division office from various parts of the world field, as well as from within the North American Division territory expressing their underlying concern as to the relations of Hope International with the Church. Many have expressed that Hope International is charting a course which is in opposition to the Church. Therefore, in reviewing this matter the North American Division officers find it necessary to express their disapproval of Hope International because of the following reasons:

1. Disruption in local churches.
2. Interference in the administration of a local conference.
3. Undermining confidence in the leadership of the Church.
4. Fostering destructive criticism.
5. Acceptance of tithe.
6. Failure to follow the North American Division Guidelines regarding independent ministries.

The above points are to a great extent based on the following understandings.

1. The Church has designated its administrative entities as the recognized storehouse, therefore, there is no provision for Hope International to accept tithe.
2. If an individual teaches error or causes serious division in a local church, naturally his/her membership would eventually come in question, as it is unacceptable to allow anyone to continually disrupt the operations of the Church.

Office of the President
12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600. Telephone (301) 680-6402. Fax (301) 680-6464

3. If Hope International and the North American Division attempt to reach a position that is acceptable to all parties, the local conference and union conference leadership should be involved in the discussion. The leaders of the North American Division do not see wisdom in unilaterally making a decision or entering into in-depth discussions without the field leaders being present so their input can be considered. Ultimately decisions which affect an independent ministry must be made on the basis of corporate counsel by the various affected levels of the Church.

It is our hope that these comments will help bring us together in how the Church should relate to Hope International.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Bradford
Charles E. Bradford, President
North American Division

Robert L. Dale
Robert L. Dale, Secretary
North American Division

George H. Crumley
George H. Crumley, Treasurer
North American Division

CS

MARCH 1, 1990

GENERAL
CONFERENCE
OF THE
SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST
CHURCH

NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

March 1, 1990

To Whom It May Concern:

The intent of this letter is to further clarify the position of the North American Division leadership in relation to independent ministries.

In the document that Biblical Research wrote describing the importance of maintaining unity in the Church, and in the Guidelines for Independent Ministries we believe we find most of the key points which indicate the position of the Church to Independent Ministries.

These major points may be summed up as follows:

1. The leadership of the Church must protect the unity of the Church at all levels.
2. The Church is God's storehouse, any deviation from this principle should not be supported.
3. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is God's true Church. Therefore, destructive criticism of the Church should not be tolerated.
4. Criticism, designed to undermine confidence of the leadership of the Church, at any level, should not be entered into.
5. Independent ministries should be willing to follow the guidelines for independent ministries voted by the North American Division Year End meeting in 1988.
6. An independent ministry should not attempt to control the administrative functions of the Church at any level.
7. Independent ministries should be established to aid the Church in fulfilling its mission of teaching the Gospel.

Office of the President
2501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600. Telephone (301) 680-6402. Fax (301) 680-6464

8. There is safety in a multitude of counselors. When various voices sound caution, and the constituted leadership of the Church, at any level, is threatened by an entity, serious consideration concerning the relationship of the leaders to the Church should be assessed.

9. One very important test which must not be overlooked, is how does any independent ministry relate to its local church. If it is impossible for the entity to function harmoniously in the environment of the local church, its broader outreach should be questioned.

10. The official position in regard to travel by Church employees serving privately operated institutions is found in NAD Working Policy C 10 30.3 and C 15 10.

11. Individuals who serve privately operated institutions, but who are not employed by the Church and who wish to travel widely should follow the policies for travel as found in the North American Division Working Policy as a courtesy to the organized church. (See number 10 above.)

C 10 30.3 Travel by Employees Serving with Privately Operated Institutions--Travel within the North American Division shall be authorized in harmony with the procedures established by the division for all denominational employees.

C 15 10 Travel by Denominational Employees Serving with Privately-Operated Institutions--Interdivision Travel--Travel outside the North American Division on official church business shall be requested/initiated and approved in the same way as for all denominational employees.

2. Continuation of Status--Should the provisions of this policy be ignored, the individual concerned will place in jeopardy the continuation of status as a denominational employee.

Possibly other items could be added, but it is our belief that the points mentioned will aid in clarifying the position of the leadership of the North American Division in relation to the important matter of the North American Division's relationship to and stand regarding independent ministries.

Sincerely,

Charles E Bradford

Charles E Bradford, President
North American Division

Robert L Dale

Robert L Dale, Secretary
North American Division

George R Crumley

George R Crumley, Treasurer
North American Division

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Enclosures: 3RI Document on Unity
Guidelines for Independent Ministries

GENERAL
CONFERENCE
OF THE
SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST
CHURCH

NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

April 10, 1991
(Dictated March 20, 1991)

Ron Spear
Hope International
PO Box 940
Eatonville, Washington 98328

Dear Ron:

Thank you so much for your cordial hospitality when I visited you recently. I appreciated your kindnesses to me.

Since my visit to Hope International, I have been looking forward to receiving the letter from you or your group which would give some positive suggestions as to how the problems we discussed might be able to be answered.

I believe it is very vital that we receive this information from you, because without some written suggestions it seems to me that it would be most difficult to make any type of further progress.

If I can be of any service, please feel free to contact me.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding this entire matter.

Most cordially yours,

Bob
Robert L. Dale

P

Vice President
12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600. Telephone (301) 680-6412. Fax (301) 680-6464



Atlantic Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

June 9, 1992

Elder Robert L. Dale, Vice President
North American Division
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

Dear Bob:

I have received letters from two conference presidents concerning the effect Hope International is having in their fields. Both of them express concern that this organization's work is contrary to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and that its activity is negatively influencing evangelism and the spiritual nurturing of our church members, particularly newly baptized people.

Hope International has chosen to conduct "Camp Meetings" as well as other general gatherings in several locations within the Atlantic Union Conference over the past several years. These meetings have brought some confusion to our members, as well as eroding to some extent the time, energy, and financial support which our members extend to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This effect is not threatening the church's viability, but it certainly diverts the attention of lay and clergy leaders to issues not directly contributing to the church's spiritual mission.

A few of our churches have adopted quite antagonistic attitudes toward conference leaders, as well as their own pastors and lay leaders who do not agree with them, as a result of the influence of "Hope International," that organization's journal, Our Firm Foundation, and the general influence of persons identifying with that group. In one case, the members are insisting that they choose Sabbath morning speakers (rather than looking to their district pastor), and in several churches some members who are influenced by this movement have become very suspicious of Seventh-day Adventist clergy.

One Conference Executive Committee officially voted to request "Hope International" and especially its leader, Ron Spear, not to conduct meetings within that conference's territory. This request was conveyed to Ron Spear both verbally and in writing, but the meetings were held as scheduled.

Our conference leaders wish that they could vigorously pursue the mission of proclaiming the Three Angels' Messages without distractions which divert time, energy, and other resources in attempting to reply to what appear to be endless complaints and doctrinal disputations which seem to be encouraged and nurtured by "Hope International."

Cordially yours,

Phil
Philip Follett
President



JUN 09 1992
 TELEPHONE: (516) 627-9350
 (800) 392-3929
 FAX (516) 627-9272

Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

P.O. BOX 1029 • 7 SHELTER ROCK ROAD • MANHASSET, NEW YORK 11030-0492

June 4, 1992

Robert L. Dale, Vice-President
 NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION
 12501 Old Columbia Pike
 Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

Dear Brother Dale:

The Firm Foundation Organization is proving to be a problem in our field. The magazine which was sent out to our members, both, English and Spanish speaking, has some good subjects, but unfortunately the subtle, and sometimes not so subtle spirit of criticism found therein is causing confusion among our members.

We have some new members who have almost left the church as a result of this magazine. I really think that it is time to let our members know that the Firm Foundation Organization should not be classified as a Seventh-Day Adventist organization, and that anyone supporting this movement is working against our evangelistic efforts.

One thing is sure: God is leading the Seventh-Day Adventist denomination and this organization and church will go through to the end, which event will be very soon now.

Cordially your brother in Christ,

Merlin Kretschnmar
 President

MK/sg/Dale

Southern New England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

MASSACHUSETTS
 CONNECTICUT
 RHODE ISLAND

Office of the President

May 27, 1992

Elder Robert Dale
 North American Division of SDA
 12501 Old Columbia Pike
 Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

FAX 301-680-6464

Dear Bob:

The Southern New England Conference has many members who are very sympathetic to Hope International because they feel, after reading Our Firm Foundation, that the organized Seventh-day Adventist church is not preaching "the whole truth" and is holding back information as well as misusing the tithe.

Many of these people support the above mentioned ministry with their tithe and offerings. Some of these people are presently leaders in our churches and trying to use their influence toward others others joining them.

We are concerned and are prayerfully addressing the issue.

The same could be said for the Prophecy Countdown organization. Many members are receiving the videos produced and asking questions about the church organization, etc. These situations are also being addressed.

To my knowledge, these organizations have not had a visible presence in our Conference for sometime, however several of these men connected with Hope International have spoken to some of our members through a local organization called New England Ministries.

We are praying that these organizations will loose strength in our Conference soon.

Sincerely,

Charles C. Case, Ed.D.
 President

kb

cc: Elder Philip Follett.

THE VILLAGE CHURCH

Of Seventh-day Adventists

Sawyer Street, South Lancaster, MA 01561
(508) 385-2754

April 28, 1992

Elder Charles Case, President
Southern New England Conference
34 Sawyer St.
So. Lancaster, MA 01561

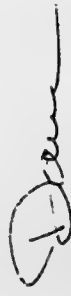
Dear Elder Case:

I write this letter in response to the request for information on Prophecy Countdown and Hope International. This letter refers particularly to some effects of Mr. John Osborne and Prophecy Countdown.

About eighteen months ago, our church brought Pastor Garrie Williams in for a week-end seminar on small groups. A few days before he came, some ardent followers of Prophecy Countdown began to circulate video tapes produced by John Osborne in which aspersions were cast and suspicion aroused. The week-end was a very real feast and blessing, but it came to nought in the long-term to a large extent because of the uncertainty and suspicion aroused by the video campaign.

I have observed the effects of that so called ministry. In my experience, they are diabolical.

Sincerely,



Dave Thomas
Pastor

fc

February 27, 1992

Ralph Larson
9341 Lofty Lane
Cherry Valley, CA 92223

Dear Mr. Larson:

This is to acknowledge your collection of materials which came to me in response to my *Messenger* article of December, 1991.

The only thing I can do now is assure you that I have no intention of continuing a debate, public or private with you. It is very clear that you do have a proclivity for misstating reality and I must graciously withdraw from discussion with you. My natural enjoyment is to challenge and be challenged, however, in this case, I'm opting out for the following reasons:

1. In your letter you said, "I could only wish that we might have discussed our differences privately..." Be assured that I never did have any differences with you personally. I was challenging the integrity of the article you wrote, however, this has nothing to do with you personally. It is true, you as the person wrote what you wrote, but when you write, surely you know that it enters an open arena for discussion and debate. Why should I have discussed what you wrote publicly in a private way? If the matter you wrote in *OFF* is for the public, surely it is right for me to debate it in public.
2. Your defense for quoting Ellen White out of context is nonsense. The comparison to the fourth commandment has no logical relationship. The fact is that you quoted out of context! How can you compare that to Saturday not being mentioned in the fourth commandment? The context of the fourth commandment is the weekly cycle and the seventh day of the week which we know to be Saturday.

Very strangely, I gave evidence for my writing that Larson misquoted Ellen White, yet you came back to say that what I wrote was lacking in evidence. If you wish to disagree with me on my opinions, that is perfectly fine, but to deny what is clear evidence is a problem you will need to reckon with. In your article you state, "I stand ready to correct my conclusions at any time

Ralph Larson
February 19, 1992
Page 2

that evidence is presented to me that would justify such corrections . . . " Yet, when you are faced with the evidence of abuse of the Spirit of Prophecy, you deny it and formulate specious reasoning.

May I suggest that you use this opportunity to withdraw your approach and re-write a more learned response. Your approach in the letter seems to express bitterness and again I appeal to you that spiritual experience is far too valuable for you to squander on faulty arguments and in waging war against others in the Church; justifying yourself as more true to Historic Adventism.

In all kindness I beg you, as a professing believer in God, to please show the spirit of Christ by working with us to help us, (the Church), mature in faith. But above all, stop scattering the sheep. Please respond to Proverbs 6:16-19. God said, "These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and *he that soweth discord among brethren*".

Further, I appeal to you to be consistent with what surely you must have promised when you took your baptismal vow. Do you remember professing, "I believe in Church organization, and it is my purpose to support the Church by my tithes and offerings, and by my personal effort and influence." If you can no longer be true to that vow, then my counsel is for you to declare it honestly. You claim to be an "historic Adventist". I do not understand how you can make that claim and at the same time write and say what you do.

Brother Larson I have written this to you in a spirit of candid goodwill. I know I am pointed and frank, but, are not integrity and openness the objective for all of us to emulate for the sake of the discovery of truth?

My deepest desire now is for you and others who are caught in the deception of self-righteousness and "sowing discord", to humble yourselves and receive Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and Lord. Time is very short and the prophecies of the Bible are fulfilled before our very eyes. I want you to be in heaven, even as I plan to be by the Grace of God in Christ Jesus.

Most sincerely,

D. Douglas Devnich
President

DDD/jt

1

9341 Lofty Lane
Cherry Valley, CA 92223
January 23, 1992

Elder D. D. Devnich
Canadian Union Conference
1148 King Street, East
Oshawa, Ontario, Canada L1H 1H8

Dear Elder Devnich:

Permit me to introduce myself. My name is Ralph Larson. I am the object of the accusations that were spread across Canada, and to a lesser degree were circulated in the United States, in your Messenger article of December, 1991.

I deeply regret the necessity of publicly responding to your article, but it seems that I have no choice. I could only wish that we might have discussed our differences privately before you went into print. I am enclosing some materials that I hope you will examine. They are:

1. A letter of concern to the officers of the White Estate.
2. A copy of my response to the pamphlet on tithe by Roger Coon.
3. A copy of each of your two research reports: The Word Was Made Flesh and Tell of His Power.

Several thousand of each of these books are now in circulation. We have endeavored to place copies of each in the hands of all of the SDA administrators and Bible scholars in the North American Division and overseas as funds permit. Not a single line of our evidence has been challenged. I trust that this will help you to understand what motivates us.

I request that my accompanying response be published in the Messenger. I feel that most of our church members would consider this the right thing to do and would be deeply disappointed to learn that an accused person is given no opportunity to respond to the accusations.

Very sincerely yours,


Ralph Larson

cc: Messenger Editor

1

To Canadian Union Messenger

We appear to be witnessing a demonstration of the truth of the statement in my article regarding tithe in the September issue of Our Firm Foundation that:

The subject of tithe has come to be an emotional mine-field, and so let us proceed with caution. Voices that are usually calm are likely to become strident when the subject is introduced, and not infrequently strongly stirred feelings find expression in bitter accusations.

I would like to offer the following responses to the accusations in the article by Canadian Union president, D. D. Devnich in the Messenger for December, 1991:

I am not aware of any place in my writings wherein "Larson. . . accuses the pastors and leaders of the church with falsity and apostasy," nor in which I "claim that 'mainstream' Adventism is in apostasy."

I would refer the reader to Roger Coon's article on tithe in the September Review, page 3:

There is a fine line--but significant distinction--between "a church in apostasy" and "apostasy in the church."

He then concedes that there is some apostasy in our ranks today. I am in full agreement with this statement, although it is possible that Roger Coon and I might disagree as to the extent of the apostasy. I believe the present apostasy far surpasses any other apostasy in our history, but I have never regarded it as a total apostasy of all pastors and leaders, nor have I ever written that the church is in apostasy. I have worked in mission fields that have hardly been touched by the apostasy apparent in North America, Australia, and some other fields.

My article on tithe was a straight-forward report of my experience in researching that topic. My conclusions were precisely the same as the conclusions reached by Willie White, A. G. Daniels, and W. W. Prescott at an earlier time. If I have "distorted" the writings of Ellen White on the subject of tithe, then these brethren were guilty of the same distortion. And in our time several others have done in-depth studies of the Spirit of Prophecy counsels on this subject and have arrived at the same conclusions.

I stand ready to correct my conclusions at any time that evidence is presented to me that would justify such corrections, but I do not propose to be cowed by personal abuse.

2

We must remember the well-known principle of discussion that those who have evidence will present their evidence, while those who do not have evidence will resort to the argument ad hominem, against the man. By launching a barrage of personal accusations they may hope to turn attention away from the inadequacy of their evidence.

When a two-page article bristles with expressions such as "deceptive," "dishonesty," "wilful intention to mislead," "unscrupulous," "masquerading ministries," "sanctimoniously," "merchants of dissension," etc., we are well advised to give attention to whatever evidence is presented and carefully test its validity. We may find that weakness of evidence is the reason for the emotion-arousing language.

Pastor Devnich states that my article consists of half-truths, and that he has "cross-checked the Spirit of Prophecy references with the original text and has found gross misquotations drawn out of context." To support this very serious accusation, he offers no evidence at all. I hereby request that he set forth his evidence in order that it may be evaluated. I would not hesitate to place my sources and my conclusions before any group of impartial scholars and accept their judgment on my work. Nor would I hesitate to submit them to the Judge of the universe, before whom we all must presently stand.

To further support his accusations, Pastor Devnich argues that in Testimonies, Volume 7, pages 176-181, Ellen White does not mention tithe. Permit me to point out that neither does the fourth commandment mention "the week" or "Saturday." But need we doubt its meaning? This article by Ellen White is one of many that place strong emphasis upon the principle of Christian stewardship. In its first paragraph we read:

Every man has been made a steward of sacred trusts;

Each is to discharge his trust according to the direction of the Giver; and by each an account of his stewardship must be rendered to God. 7 ¶ 176

I will leave it to the considered judgment of the reader whether the responsibilities of Christian stewardship can be properly fulfilled without paying tithe.

Pastor Devnich's use of arguments "against the man" reach their lowest point in his characterizations of independent ministry leaders as persons who "continue to position themselves as the 'true' and 'faithful' guardians of the fundamentals of

Adventism." No independent ministry leader of my acquaintance would dream of setting himself forth as either the arbiter of truth or as a paragon of virtue. Each insists that the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy are the arbiters of truth, and that it is the duty of all to follow these inspired writings.

Is it asking too much of our church leaders that they listen when departures from these divine standards are pointed out? Is it asking too much that they avoid the use of inaccurate, intemperate, and inflammatory language when they write for our church papers? Surely more calm and reasoned tones and a more statesman-like attitude would be appropriate for Christian administrators.

In closing, may I point out that John Osborne was "disfellowshipped" by the Florida Conference after he had already requested that his name be removed from their records because he was in the process of being accepted into the membership of a church in another conference. He has actually never lost his church membership.

Very sincerely yours,


Ralph Larson



HEADQUARTERS, FORT CARSON AND
4TH INF. DIV. (MECH)

GARY R. COUNCELL
CHAPLAIN (LIEUTENANT COLONEL), U.S. ARMY
DIVISION CHAPLAIN

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Elder D. Douglas Devnich
President, Canadian Union
1148 King Street
East Oshawa, Alberta, CANADA L1H 1H8

Dear Elder Devnich,

Recently, I read your article, "President's Perspective," in the December 1991 issue of MESSENGER, and wish to share my experience with Mr. Ron Spears and some of his followers. At the time the enclosed letter was written I was an Army chaplain assigned to the Pentagon in the Office of the Chief of Chaplains, and served the Potomac Conference as interim pastor of Winchester, Virginia, SDA Church of 175 members for four months.

My work with the Winchester congregation started rather roughly due to a somewhat unpleasant encounter with Hope International adherents. Though dated, the perspectives I shared with Elder Ralph Martin may be helpful in dealing with independents. During the last three years I have come to view Ron Spears and his organization much less favorably than what I wrote, and see him gradually and surely leading his following into separatism and total hopelessness. I have written him about such trends that are boldly transparent in his journal, "Our Firm Foundation," but he has never ventured a response.

I believe the easiest way for evil to triumph is for the good to do nothing; hence, the best defense is an active offense. I totally concur with the Church setting the record straight about the nature and activities of independent organizations that make claims of being Seventh-day Adventist. Thanks for your courageous stand and being willing to take the "heat rounds" for writing what you did; it was an excellent article right on target.

Sincerely yours,

Gary R. Councell

Gary R. Councell
Chaplain (LTC), U.S. Army
7008 Quarters
Fort Carson, Colorado, USA 80913
(719) 540-8593

President
Potomac Conference
P.O. Box #1208
Staunton, VA 24401
12 January 1989

Dear Elder Martin,

Last weekend Ron Spears of Hope International, P.O. Box #940, Eatonville, Washington 98328, presented a weekend series of meetings in the Winchester SDA Church (Enclosure #1). As we discussed earlier on the telephone, an unintentional conflict between my established preaching schedule (Enclosure #2) and the time of his meetings caused some tension that is still rumbling (mostly from SDA visitors who are not church members at Winchester).

When you visited Winchester recently, something you allegedly mentioned upset certain members who see themselves as guardians of orthodoxy. Consequently, these brethren obtained church board sanction (by a narrow margin and questionable tactics) to invite Ron Spears to Winchester for the purpose of "setting the record straight and presenting the real truth."

Thru direct contact with Brother Spears, an understanding was reached in which he readily agreed to my conducting the regularly scheduled Sabbath services. Certain members were unhappy with our arrangement and muttered incessantly about "power politics," but the majority of Winchester church members were pleased that the year was starting off with communion (Enclosure #3).

Ron Spears is a Christian gentleman who has given over thirty years of distinguished service to the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a pastor, missionary and administrator. He is very concerned about "the intrusion of a new theology into the SDA Church," and sincerely believes his theological perspective is the correct understanding of salvation. He considers himself and his organization as Seventh-day Adventist in purpose and standing. He is also knowledgeable of the recent Brimsmead and Ford problems, and takes steps to avoid appearing or being categorized as breaking off from the organized Church.

Having the interesting experience of dealing with this situation, I wish to share a few observations in retrospect. Obviously, my initial meeting with Brother Spears and brief exposure to his teachings do not make me an "expert" on Hope International. And, in the interest of objectivity, statements made in public

presentations can easily be misunderstood and quoted out of context, as was your own by the mischief makers at Winchester. Nevertheless, certain reactions may have merit and prove helpful to your understanding of how best to work with the Winchester District and the type of pastor that needs to be assigned there.

1. General theme of the presentations. Based on his premise that the SDA Church has preached only half the Gospel (the Law), Ron Spears emphasizes the other half (the faith of Jesus), which he defines as "the power to obey the Law perfectly." He sees the key to the kingdom for believers as the balanced application of obedience and faith. Revelation 14:12. "The everlasting Gospel is a restoration of righteousness (God-likeness) in man... and righteousness is the lack of sin... The Gospel is that Jesus has enough power to keep us from sinning." Man can and must overcome all sin in this life as Jesus did in order to be ready for translocation. "The Third Angel's message is victory over sinning." The Judgment starts in the sanctuary (SDA Church) of the living. The Judgment hour message is one of reproof, and "opposing this (his) straight message will cause one to be lost." The content of the sermons had a familiar ring and echoed similar voices from recent doctrinal discussions with other dissident groups.

2. Personal reaction. Despite his emphasis on faith and righteousness, each presentation came across as increasingly more critical, emotional and negative (offering little hope). In short, Ron's stance on sinless living sounded like the very legalism he claims to oppose, and misleads people into looking for heaven here and now on earth. To my thinking, his definitions and presuppositions are narrow and superficial. The Gospel is not limited to benefit certain Adventists ("144,000 modern Enochs"), but offers the hope of salvation to all men who respond and accept its provisions. The great controversy between Christ and Satan concerns more than the issue of individual sin. The church comprises all the people of God ('o laos), not just a few Adventists.

3. Use of E. G. White writings. Ron Spears rejects the title of author and editor; he calls himself a "compiler." With his extensive familiarity of Ellen G. White's writing he can easily appear credible to the uninformed lay member. But Joyce and I were appalled at his misuse of the spirit of prophecy as a formal authority and source of doctrinal beliefs. Typical of this approach was his selective use of quotes that affirmed preconceived notions. He failed to balance certain statements with others and then draw from the whole picture an applicable principle for Christian belief and practice today.

4. Congregational responses. We were interested in the responses of the congregation to the messages. To even the casual observer

a network of Hope International followers exist in our area. This element within the Church, though widely scattered from Hartland Institute, Seabrook, West Virginia and other places, is organized and easily communicates with one another. About sixty visitors came to Winchester for the hastily organized seminar. Sadly, half of those would not participate in the observance of the Ordinances during the worship hour. Brother Spears did. About a third of the Winchester church membership attended the Friday evening and Sabbath afternoon meetings. The communion service went very smoothly; it was deeply spiritual, simple and dignified. Many of the congregation remarked the service was the best they could remember.

The afternoon meetings showed a marked contrast. As if by magic, audio recorders and video cam recorders appeared. An aura of seriousness prevailed. "Amen's" punctuated nearly every sentence uttered by Brother Spears. Yet no joy or uplifted spirits seemed evident; instead, the "plain folk" looked dreadfully pious, glum and judgmental. We felt sorry for their youth who were forced to sit thru the long afternoon and evening. Unfortunately, in situations like this one at Winchester, Hope International and its leaders are often misrepresented by some of its adherents; some followers even misuse the organization to further their own sordid views and practices. Their purposes have little to do with theology and much to do with issues of authority, control and power. (Brother Spears is painfully aware of this problem and readily acknowledges its existence). Such is the case in Winchester.

5. Parasitic nature. Lastly, as a church member, I object to Hope International using the infrastructure of the SDA Church to further its own goals and teachings. Winchester church members in good and regular standing sacrificed and worked to build a congregation and obtain a representative church building. For another organization to take advantage of their efforts and basically undermine the Seventh-day Adventist Church position is disloyal and irresponsible. I believe in "freedom of the Gospel;" our Church and its message accommodates many perspectives and cultural differences. Christians must respect differing positions and love their proponents. I do not view Hope International as an off-shoot branch, neither is Ron Spears a heretic. But I cannot see any positive good for the Winchester Church resulting from the seminar. So who needs Hope International? Not the majority of the Winchester SDA Church or Adventists in general. In the future, if they wish to hold a revival seminar, let them rent a hall and pay their own way just as SDAs must do when we enter a new territory. My experience in dealing with Hope International leads me to believe they would be more aptly named, "HopeLESS International!"

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Potomac Conference would do well to consider a policy of no more free lunches at church members' expense! An offering of \$427.87 was collected during the afternoon meeting for Ron Spears that could have been contributed towards legitimate Church needs; only so many resources exist for giving. The collection of such offerings for any "outside" cause or person should not be permitted in Potomac Conference SDA Churches without prior conference authorization.

2. A full-time pastor for the Winchester SDA Church should be installed not later than 31 March 1989. The man must know how to deal with conflict, be secure professionally and a biblical preacher. The Winchester SDA Church needs to become a working church and get involved with their community.

3. The Leesburg SDA Church should be removed from the district. As I have stated in separate correspondence, the Winchester and Leesburg SDA Churches have no common links that tie them together. Church members have some strong resentments over this forced union.

4. No undue attention should be focused on the problem of a relatively small insurgent element of ultra-conservatives. History verifies their futility and repetition. Tragically, such movements attract certain mind-sets/personalities and lead them out of the church and away from a meaningful relationship with God. Precious few ever come back; most are lost. Pastors can best counteract this pharisaic legalism by preaching the Gospel and leading the church members into intentional programs of community outreach. Idle churches without a mission become introverted congregations ripe for the rot of discord and strange ideas.

5. A stronger religious education/Sabbath School program, especially for adults, would do much to prevent inroads by groups such as Hope International. Meaningful class/group activities, discussion and learning could resurrect and/or replace the dead preliminary programs which few people attend. Teacher training programs need implemented across the conference. Perhaps the best model Sabbath School program in the area occurs at the Wheaton SDA Church.

I trust this rather subjective report has proved insightful. If you have further questions, I would be happy to discuss this letter with you in person. For now, the situation at Winchester seems very well in hand - "all is quiet on the western front." The Church Board meeting last evening went very well. I do think

it best if I could continue my preaching schedule thru the first week of March before a replacement pastor arrives. Blessings on you in your labors for the saints.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Original Signed

Gary R. Councell
Interim Pastor
Winchester District
4293 Country Squire Lane
Fairfax, Virginia 22032
(703) 978-5320

INDIANA CONFERENCE

April 27, 1992

Rev. 146-12

P. O. BOX 1950 CARMEL, INDIANA 46032 (317) 844-6201

Elder Robert L. Dale
Vice-President
North American Division
General Conference of SDA
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, Maryland 20904-6600

Dear Bob:

Thank you for your letter of the fourteenth regarding my involvement with Ron Spear and The Firm Foundation. I will be happy to share the basic story with you.

First of all, you will recall the experience that Mervyn Maxwell had with these people in a similar vein. Right on the heels of that, these people printed in their October, 1991 issue a copy of a piece that I wrote for the Lake Union Herald on November 3, 1987, entitled, "The Special SDA Test". I have enclosed a copy so that you will have this.

As soon as I saw this, I was appalled and sent a letter dated October 14, 1991 to Ron Spear regarding this matter. I have enclosed a copy of that for you also.

About the same time, in light of what Gary Patterson had put out to the field regarding Mervyn Maxwell's situation, I asked Gary to send a similar letter to the field in reference to my situation. I have enclosed a copy of that addressed to "To Whom It May Concern" dated October 17, 1991.

Ron Spear did respond to my entreaty, and in the December, 1991 issue he printed the major portion of my letter of October 14. I have also enclosed a copy of his item along these lines.

Basically, Bob, that is the story. This certainly does demonstrate the lack of integrity and ethics that these folks manifest. I do trust that this information will be helpful to you, and may God continue to bless your good work there.

Sincerely your friend in Christ,



John F. Loor
President

JRL:bt

15250 N. MERIDIAN STREET, CARMEL, INDIANA 46032

Seabrook SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

8900 Good Luck Road
Lanham-Seabrook, MD 20706
301-577-6342

July 6, 1992

To Robert Dale
V.P. - NAD

JUL 23 1992

To whom it may concern,

The following is a record to the best of my knowledge concerning Hartland and one of our members here at Seabrook Seventh-day Adventist church.

A little over a year ago, one of our newer members asked to see me in my office one morning. She was in tears when she arrived. Naturally, I was quite concerned, especially since she was new to the church. She had just been baptized—about five months previous to the incident I am about to relate.

It seems that she was invited by one of our other members to attend one of Hartland's three-day weekend meetings. Thinking of this as an opportunity for further spiritual growth and blessing, she chose to attend.

Sometime during this weekend, she had a private meeting with Mr. Colin Standish. She related to me that he told her that her baptism was no good and that she needed to be baptized again at their meeting that weekend. She was confused, but consented to be baptized by him.

A few days later, she was in my office in tears and in a state of great consternation. She was worried that she hadn't been forgiven by God because her first baptism "hadn't took." Was she still a member of the church? If so, where was her membership, at Seabrook or Hartland?

Was she accepted by our church or was there something else that she must do? Should she deny her previous experience with the Lord? I can guarantee that her emotion was real and heart-felt. I have never, either before or since, seen her in tears or in such a confused and emotional condition.

Fortunately, I was able to quiet her fears and resolve her questions. She is still a member of our church today.

My personal feeling concerning this situation was one of dismay. I feel that what was done to this new believer was highly unethical, uncalled for and just plain wrong! It is a common practice for one pastor to at least call another pastor if there is a question concerning a member. This, of course, was not done. Certainly our newest sheep deserve more considerate handling than this. By taking advantage of her sincerity, Mr. Standish did her real spiritual harm. Since this incident, as you might imagine, I have tried to steer others away from Hartland. While I personally believe there is a place for self-supporting Adventist work, these types of incidents undermine our members and the stability of the whole work.

If I can be of further help or give any more information, please feel free to contact me.

In His service,

Pastor Robert L. Streib

Pastor Robert L. Streib
Senior Pastor

INDIANA CONFERENCE

P. O. BOX 1950 CARMEL, INDIANA 46032 (317) 844-6201

October 14, 1991

Ron Spear
Hope International
P.O. Box 940
Eatonville, Washington 98328

Dear Ron:

I am writing to you at this time in reference to an item that appeared in your publication, Our Firm Foundation, October, 1991. It is entitled, "The Special SDA Test". As you have indicated in the first few lines, this was taken from the Lake Union Herald and is an article I wrote for the Herald dated November 3, 1987.

I really feel, Ron, that there has been a breach of ethics here. I certainly stand by the message of the article, but I do believe it is unfortunate that you folks utilized this without permission from the Lake Union Herald or myself. I really do feel that the Christian thing at all times is to be totally ethical on matters of this type.

I am taking this opportunity to request that you folk print in your next issue a statement indicating this was used without permission by me or the Lake Union Herald. This is surely the only fair thing to do under the circumstances.

Thank you so much for your attention to this request, and I appreciate your faithful follow-through in this regard.

With appreciation,

John R. Loor
John R. Loor
President

JRL:bt

cc Herb Pritchard

October 17, 1991

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

The October, 1991, issue of Our Firm Foundation on page 14 carries an article entitled, "The Special SDA Test". Under the title the following appears:

"We wish to express our appreciation for the position taken by John R. Loor in this article, printed in the Lake Union Herald, November 3, 1987 - Editors"

I very much appreciate Gary Patterson's willingness to cooperate with me in letting you all know that I did not authorize Our Firm Foundation to publish this article. They did not obtain permission from me or the Lake Union Herald.

I have written a letter to the editor requesting that they indicate in their next issue that this was done without my permission or that of the Lake Union Herald.

I trust that this information will be helpful.

Your brother in Christ,

John R. Loor

John R. Loor
President

JRL:bt

15250 N. MERIDIAN STREET, CARMEL, INDIANA 46012

is not there, and he does not go weighted with the spirit of the solemn message of truth for this time. An exhibition of this character clearly proves that the man does not know God, and has not been intrusted with the solemn work which he does not understand or appreciate.

If the minister had a realizing sense of the presence of God, would he conduct himself in this way? He had great light, and had taken upon himself the sacred responsibility of a minister of God, and yet he acts as carelessly as if he was an unbeliever. His actions make it evident that he has as much realization of the presence of God as had Belshazzar when he drank from the sacred vessels from the house of the Lord, praising the gods of gold and silver. The mighty men and the lords of the kingdom were assembled, and they ate and drank, and had a jovial time, but the True Witness was there, and their profanity was recorded in the books of heaven. In the midst of their revelry, a bloodless hand appeared, tracing mysterious characters upon the wall of the palace, and their godless mirth was checked, and terror and despair took its place. They inquired for some one who could interpret the writing, and Daniel, the prophet of

God, was called to the banquet room, and the servant of the Lord was able to decipher the writing, and interpret the meaning of the words. "This is the interpretation of the thing: Mene; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. Tekel; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Peres; Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." Daniel 5:26-28

The same Witness that recorded the profanity of Belshazzar is present with us wherever we go. Young man, young woman, you may not realize that God is looking upon you; you may feel that you are at liberty to act out the impulses of the natural heart, that you may indulge in lightness and trifling, but for all these things you must give an account. As you sow, you will reap, and if you are taking the foundation from your house, robbing your brain of its nutriment, and your nerves of their power by dissipation and indulgence of appetite and passion, you will have an account to render to Him who says, "I know thy works."

If you knew God, if you were truly converted, you would not take pleasure in sinful things. The fear of God would be upon you, and as you looked to

Calvary, the hateful character of transgression would be revealed to you, and you would see the great love wherewith God has loved you, and you would not have a disposition to sin. But how would it be with many of you who have dared to handle sacred things with unclean hands and with defiled souls, should the trumpet sound today? How would it be with some of you, should you be called to render up your account at the judgment seat of Christ today? I ask, What would be your condition if Christ should leave the holy place today, and probation should close, and Christ should come? That time is soon to come, though we know not the day or the hour.

The times and the seasons are known only to God, but we are each to know that it is well with our souls, that Christ is formed within, the hope of glory. We are to know that our Redeemer liveth, and that we will be among that number who shall hear the voice of Christ, who will be gathered by the angels of God, and caught up to meet the Lord in the air. □

Review and Herald, vol. 2, 555-556 (March 29, 1892)

The Special SDA Test

We wish to express our appreciation for the position taken by John R. Loor in this article, printed in the Lake Union Herald, November 3, 1987.—EDITORS

Most of us are familiar with Revelation 12:17, "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

Here, attention is called to the two earmarks of the remnant or Seventh-day Adventist Church. The commandments call special attention to God's Sabbath. The testimony of Jesus is defined in Revelation 19:10 as the Spirit of Prophecy. This is biblical language for the manifestation of the prophetic gift. Adventists believe that this was seen and embodied in the ministry of Ellen G. White.

Not only are these two earmarks significant in the identification of God's remnant church, but they are recognized as the special objects of Satan's wrath. He hates both of these with a demonic passion.

With full knowledge of Satan's attitude toward these two, it is vital that we become continually concerned about the impact of *Selected Messages*, book 1, 48:

"The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. . . . Satan will work

ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony. . . . *There will be a hatred kindled against the testimonies which is satanic*" (emphasis supplied).

Carefully place this statement beside Revelation 12:17 and Revelation 13, and it is clear that the big test of the world at large in the end will be in reference to the seal of God and the mark of the beast.

It is also clear that the big test among God's remnant people will be in reference to the Spirit of Prophecy. The supreme issue is and always will be Jesus Christ. But for Adventists, the supreme occasion will be in reference to the Spirit of Prophecy.

Generally, the first step in apostasy for Adventists is in reference to this consideration. Catch the impact of *Selected Messages*, book 3, 84, "Those Seventh-day Adventists who take their stand under Satan's banner will *first* give up their faith in the warnings and reproofs contained in the Testimonies of God's Spirit" (emphasis supplied).

As we look to the future, let us be sure that we really do love Jesus and that He is supreme in our lives. In this context, let us also be sure that we love and seek to implement in our lives the counsel of the testimony of Jesus, which is the Spirit of Prophecy.

Spiritual Drunkenness

Continued from 27

to dwell in the mind and heart of one that is lifted up unto vanity. In His prayer Christ said, "I have glorified thee on the earth." This is the science of heaven. "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." John 17:4-5

These are the words of Him who was one in mind, in heart, and purpose, with God in the work of saving a fallen world. God and Christ had oneness of purpose, oneness of aim, and they made one eternal never-ending effort to work for the salvation of the fallen race. The prayer of Christ lays open before the intelligent, understanding mind that not one taint of the science of Satan's practice can enter the Holy City.

Satan worked in every possible way to come out victorious in standing in the highest place in the heavenly courts. How artful were his contrivances to win the game! He employed every artful intrigue and device to carry his science against God and His Son Jesus Christ.

As I am shown special things of Satan's science, and how he deceived the holy angels, I am afraid of the men who have entered into the study of the science that Satan carried into the warfare in heaven. How I have longed to be where I should not be compelled to see the same science practiced on this earth by medical practitioners. How my heart has been agonized as I have seen souls accepting the inducements held out to them to unite with those who were warring against God! When they once accept the bait it seems impossible to break the spell that Satan casts over them, because the enemy works out the science of deception as he worked it out in the heavenly courts. He has worked so diligently with men in our day that he has won the game again and again.

What, I ask, can be the end? Again and again have I asked this, and I have always received the same instruction, Never leave a soul unwarned. Those who are bound in Satan's coils are the most confident and the most boastful. They will protest at the thought that they are ensnared, yet it is the truth. □

Battle Creek Letters, 122-128 (Letter 311, October 30, 1905)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Our Firm Foundation
P.O. Box 940
Eatonville, Wa 98328

I am writing to you at this time in reference to an item that appeared in your publication, *Our Firm Foundation*, October 1991. It is entitled "The Special SDA Test." As you have indicated in the first few lines, this was taken from the *Lake Union Herald* and is an article I wrote for the *Herald*, dated November 3, 1987.

I really feel, Ron, that there has been a breach of ethics here. I certainly stand by the message of the article, but I do believe it is unfortunate that you folks utilized this without permission from the *Lake Union Herald* or myself. I really do feel that the Christian thing at all times is to be totally ethical on matters of this type.

—John R. Loor, Pres.
Indiana Conf. of SDA

We were greatly encouraged to have a conference president uplift the prophet of our church in such a manner. Therefore we reprinted this article in the October 1991 issue of Our Firm Foundation. This article was used without the permission of John R. Loor or the Lake Union Herald. We totally support the Seventh-day Adventist church leadership whenever they uplift the counsels of the Spirit of Prophecy and the Bible and seek to incorporate those counsels in directing the church.—EDITORS

Regarding "The Tithe Problem," September 1991: I find it difficult to understand the author's sense of fairness as a professed writer for the Word. To malign the church and the ministry in a public forum by quoting a statement of a supposedly responsible person ("I get tired of going to church every Sabbath and getting my weekly dose of strychnine from the pulpit") and using it as a base to indict the ministry as a whole is contrary to the principles enunciated by Jesus Christ. I feel repulsed by such an approach.

—RS, Canada

We have received several letters expressing concern regarding the wording

of the article mentioned in the letter above. For generations strychnine was widely used as a tonic because of its stimulating effect in low doses. Many a compassionate, well-meaning physician prescribed it for a multitude of physical ills. The patient and physician honestly believed that the best available care was being provided. The Holy Spirit led Ellen G. White to repeatedly condemn the use of strychnine along with other popular medicines of that day as poisonous and harmful. Today science has proved that strychnine is indeed a deadly poison, but this came too late to save the thousands—even millions—who were actually harmed by it rather than benefited by it as they and the administrators of it believed. (See "Ellen White's Criticism of Nineteenth Century Medicine," Albert E. Hirst, Adventist Review, June 30, 1983.)

Seventh-day Adventists who today are teaching and preaching that Christians cannot stop sinning even by the power of God, although with all compassion and sincerity and even though it is readily accepted by some as the truth, we believe that in the end this teaching will prove to be just as deadly and harmful and with more eternal consequences than the "weekly dose of strychnine." We regret that the article gave the impression to some that this statement was generally applicable to all Adventist pulpits. We know that there are many pulpits giving the true, historic Adventist message, and we ask forgiveness if we implied otherwise.—EDITORS

I am recently engaged to be married and, as usual, the Lord has provided me with counsel and guidance at just the right time. A friend gave my fiancée and me the August issue of *Our Firm Foundation*, and we are enjoying its messages tremendously. Enclosed is a check which I know the Lord will use to broaden and strengthen Hope International.

—EF, Virginia

NAD SEC

Wisconsin Conference of Seventh-day Adventists P.O. Box 7310 Madison, Wisconsin 53707 (608) 241-5235
March 13, 1992

Elder Harold W. Baptiste
Secretary, North American Division
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

Dear Elder Baptiste:

One of our church members who questions why we have a church manual has sent me a copy of the REVIEW AND HERALD article of November 27, 1883, written by the General Conference President, George Butler. Along with it is some additional information of actions taken at the General Conference session of November 20, 1883 in which a decision was made that we should not have a church manual.

The question that is apparently circulating in some of the independent organizations is convincing people that we should not have had a church manual since 1883 as per the action that was taken.

Has any research been done concerning why there is a church manual since that date, or what counsel Ellen G. White gave after 1883?

I would appreciate anything you would have regarding this to share with this church member who is quite perplexed that we adhere to a church manual that was voted out in 1883.

Sorry to bother you with these details, but it would help if we had any material on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

A. L. Nelson

A. L. Nelson
Secretary/Treasurer

sp

Hope International
Box 940
Burienville, WA 98323
(206) 822-8802

February 5, 1988

Pastor Clark Floyd
336 North Absaroka
Powell, Wyoming 82435

Dear Clark:

Your letter of February 1 is at hand and I know there are many things being said at the present time. Joel Thompkins, the Union President of Mid-America, has written a letter in which he accuses me of being worse than Desmond Ford. This letter has been widely circulated throughout the Adventist Church in North America. This is a tragedy. He has no evidence for this.

I had a meeting last Wednesday, January 27, with the General Conference--Neal Wilson and a large group of men met there--also other independent ministries were represented. This meeting produced a dialogue which we will continue in other meetings. I think that the brethren now better understand us and we are seeing that there is going to be an effort put forward to try to understand us in the light that heaven has ordained, that some of us preach the straight testimony.

Concerning the tithe problem, we are taking tithe, but we have never solicited it and we never will. But many of the people today because of the Davenport problems, the Harris Pine Mills, the Lake Union Regional Conference misuse of tithe and now Pacific Union College has been found guilty of using a million and a half dollars of tithe money over a twenty-year period for church expense, and other problems that have developed, are saying that as good stewards they cannot continue to support the organization. It is not that we have asked for tithe, it is because God is impressing people to send some of it our way. We informed the General Conference of this three years ago when we began to accept tithe. It is not something that we have hidden.

Also we find that It Is Written, Voice of Prophecy, Quiet Hour, Amazing Facts, and many of the other self-supporting institutions are taking tithe. Not that they solicit it, but it is coming to them because many of our people today are disenchanting in the way tithe has been used.

"Our Firm Foundation" magazine does not get into dealing with personalities or specific issues, as you well know. But we do believe this magazine is ordained of God to give the straight testimony to the church--which we will continue to do without compromise. Many of our brethren are misunderstanding the straight testimony and calling it criticism. But if you look at Series B, No. 2, page 20 and 14; also look at 3T, page 252, 253; then read 1T, page 181-187, I think that you will find that this message must come to the church. That message is not only the straight testimony, it is the message of the Laodicean church.

Pastor Clark Floyd
February 5, 1988
page 2

We remember quite well being with you there and we greatly appreciate your writing to us. Anytime we can clarify things, we will be glad to. We know that as we move to the end, there are going to be a lot of problems that are going to develop. Our worst enemies, we are told, are going to be Seventh-day Adventists and I think if you read SM, vol. 1, page 122, she says we have far more to fear from within than from without. And we are trying to be as cautious as we can and yet without compromise give the message that God has ordained to come to the church at this present time.

May God bless you there. If you need anything else, please get in touch with us. Must close.

Sincerely,



Ron Spear
Executive Director

lm

November 11, 1985

Marty Wold
Box 98
Liberty, TN 37095

Dear Marty:

It was with great sadness that I read your article in *The Layworker*.

If you remember our conversation after you had been separated from the work, I asked you point blank if you were preaching separation and you said, no. I took your word and felt that maybe Dr. Standish had been mis-informed on what you were saying.

Two different times people have told me to warn you that you were preaching things that would lead people to separation. I have tried to warn you. After one such call I called Jeanne Cook to warn you again, but you were out with Ty Gibson. I asked Jeanne to warn you before you went to California.

You ask me to show you from the Spirit of Prophecy and the Bible where you are wrong. My answer is that there is nothing in either to substantiate your position. All through the Old Testament the faithful were re-scuted but never do we read where the prophets said to "come out from her."

Jesus and the prophets did not preach separation; they were separated by church action. They were thrown out of the synagogues but they continued to go back to witness.

Luther and the reformers did not preach separation; they were thrown out and were forced to find meeting places outside the church.

Josiah Litch misapplied Rev. 18:1-4 to his day--they were to give the second angel's message, not the fourth.

Ellen Harmon and her family were disfellowshipped as well as many others. It is true that thousands separated at the call from Litch and others, but it was not time for such a message. Ellen G. White applies that message to the end, our time--however not to those within Adventism, but to those in other churches.

Let us not make Ellen White say something that she would not say now. Listen to her inspired words.

Finite man is likely to misjudge character, but God does not leave the work of judgment and pronouncing upon character to those who are not fitted for it. We are not to say what constitutes the wheat, and what the tares. The time of the harvest will fully determine the character of the two classes specified under the figure of the tares and the wheat. The work of separation is given to the angels of God, and not committed into the hands of any man. *Testimonies to Ministers*, 47

The tares and the wheat are not to be separated by men, but by angels. Again she gives strong counsel:

When anyone arises, either among us or outside of us, who is burdened with a message which declares that the people of God are numbered with Babylon, and claims that the loud cry is a call to come out of her, you may know that he is not bearing the message of truth. Receive him not, nor bid him Godspeed; for God has not spoken by him, neither has He given a message to him, but he has run before he was sent. *Testimonies to Ministers*, 41

In *The Layworker* you pass over this counsel given many times in *Testimonies to Ministers* from page 16 to 62. You have not given these statements your careful and prayerful thought, but have formed your belief that because of its terrible apostasy, the church must be Babylon. You are very, very wrong. This apostasy will continue to get worse.

One thing it is certain is soon to be realized--the great apostasy, which is developing and increasing and waxing stronger, and will continue to do so until the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout. *Series B*, No. 7, 56, 57

When men negate these cardinal beliefs listed in *Testimonies to Ministers*, 61, 62 this will bring us to the final shaking and the church's purification.

It is our individual duty to walk humbly with God. We are not to seek any strange, new message. We are not to think that the chosen ones of God who are trying to walk in the light compose Babylon. The fallen denominational churches are Babylon. Babylon has been fostering poisonous doctrines, such as the natural immortality of the soul, the eternal torment of the wicked, the denial of the pre-existence of Christ prior to His birth in Bethlehem, and advocating and exalting the first day of the week above God's holy and sanctified day.

The leaders, pastors, and laity who give up their beliefs in these doctrines will go into Babylon. When the statements in 1 *Review & Herald*, 405 become a reality the separation will have been made by the angels, not by man.

Remember the weeping between the porch and the altar is done inside the church, not on the outside. You are taking on your shoulders a responsibility that should make you tremble with fear. But because of your youth and inexperience you handle such statements without realizing the terrible retribution you will receive for being so premature in your call to S.D.A.'s to come out of Babylon.

God's true church are those who are loyal, faithful and obedient to God. See *Upward Look*, 315 & *Acts of the Apostles*, 11. History shows that they have always been in the caves, dungeons, and the mountains, when the church is in the wilderness. Using history as our guide, the faithful will probably not be holding the bricks and mortar. It is true that in that final shaking (7T 219), when everything that can be shaken, God will have a pure ministry and laity.

The remnant that purifies their souls by obeying the truth gather strength from the trying process, exhibiting the beauty of holiness amid the surrounding apostasy.... The great issue so near at hand will weed out those whom God has not appointed, and He will have a pure, sanctified ministry prepared for the latter rain. 2 *Selected Messages*, 380 and deleted paragraph in D-55-1886.

The Lord will have a people as true as steel, and with faith as firm as the granite rock. They are to be His witnesses in the world, His instrumentalities to do a special, a glorious work in the day of His preparation. 4 *Testimonies*, 594.

You have cut yourself off from the main body of the church. That article in *The Layworker* will have closed the minds of the large part of the faithful and loyal to your ministry. You will end up with a small group of separatists who will faithfully support you.

I would suggest that you put a retraction in *The Layworker* saying that this tape was made some time back and you now see things differently.

Dr. Colin Standish has counseled you and I have counseled you. The Spirit of Prophecy is very clear that young men are to take counsel from experienced men. Ellen White has much to say about young men relating to older men of experience. Please do not turn from this God-directed counsel.

You referred to *Early Writings*, 118, 89. The sealing angel is the third angel who will select the wheat from the tares. This statement is a very poor hermeneutical foundation on which to build your position. There can be no loud cry before there is separation within our own ranks. Remember the angels of God will do the separation.

Possibly you cannot understand my concern. We here at Ilope International have dedicated ourselves to placing the Introductory Issue of our paper, *Our Firm Foundation*, in every Seventh-day Adventist home in North America in 1986. Your own association with us in any way after the *Layworker* article would have prevented many from accepting the material that is so important for this hour. We have some who are writing for us who stand with us in this message and who we have a responsibility to. Some of these are men of some responsibility in high places.

Let us remember that God knows how to separate. We must be patient. In His time He will separate the unaffected ones.

Men of true Christian principle will take their place, and will become faithful, trustworthy householders, to advocate the word of God in its true bearings, and in its simplicity. The Lord will work so that the unaffected ones will be separated from the true and loyal ones.... The ranks will not be diminished. Those who are firm and true will close up the vacancies that are made by those who become offended and apostatize. *Maranatha*, 200

Please look at these closing statements, my brother, Marty.

The Lord has given to His people appropriate messages of warning, reproof, counsel, and instruction, but it is not appropriate to take these messages out of their connection and place them where they will seem to give force to messages of error. In the pamphlet published by Brother S. and his associates, he accuses the church of God of being Babylon, and would urge a separation from the church. This is a work that is neither honorable nor righteous. In compiling this work, they have used my name and writings for the support of that which I disapprove and denounce as error. *Testimonies to Ministers*, 36

Those who start up to proclaim a message on their own individual responsibility, who while claiming to be taught and led of God, still make it their special work to tear down that which God has been for years building up,

are not doing the will of God. Be it known that these men are on the side of the great deceiver. Believe them not. They are allying themselves with the enemies of God and the truth. They will deride the order of the ministry as a system of priestcraft. From such turn away, have no fellowship with their message, however much they may quote the testimonies and seek to intrench themselves behind them. Receive them not; for God has not given them this work to do. The result of such work will be unbelief in the testimonies, and as far as possible, they will make of none effect the work that I have for years been doing. Almost my whole life-time has been devoted to this work, but my burden has often been made heavier by the arising of men who went forth to proclaim a message that God had not given them. This class of evil-workers have selected portions of the testimonies, and have placed them in the frame-work of error, in order by this setting to give influence to their false testimonies.... Those who thus bring the work of God into disrepute will have to answer before God for the work they are doing. *Review & Herald*, September 5, 1893

We are in a terrible hour of crisis and also weep over this terrible apostasy from leadership to the local churches. However, I am not going to run ahead of the angel. I am afraid, my brother, that you are.

Brother Stoker has sent us \$1,000. In the near future if you can help us with the other \$1,000 we will be grateful. The administrative committee went on my word to advance this money, so I am responsible. We love you, Marty, and pray for you. You can still rectify this mistake. It takes courage to say you were wrong, but God will help you if you do.

Again, remember that the history of the church shows it has been in apostasy 90% of the time, but Elijah, Jeremiah, Isaiah, John the Baptist and Jesus never called for separation.

I must close now. Please write us a little report of your trip to Russia. We are interested to hear how it went for you and what you were able to learn.

Sincerely,

Ron

Ron Spear

RS/cf



Greetings, fellow Christians. I'm Pastor Ron Spear. For those not acquainted with me and my ministry, I introduce myself here.

By God's grace I have spent 30 years in the Lord's work. I first accepted the call to the ministry and served as pastor to several church families. As a missionary to Africa I traveled from the snow peaks of Mt. Kilimanjaro to the endless expanse of the Serengeti, working in the wilderness with the Masai tribe. Indeed, God has His people all over this great earth.

After returning to the States, I served as departmental director, evangelist, and field representative for the Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Currently I am the director of Hope International, a non-profit Seventh-day Adventist organization which sponsors a variety of programs designed to assist Adventist laymen in their work of personal evangelism. I also serve as editor of a 32-page monthly magazine called *Our Firm Foundation*, which is patterned in many ways after the early *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*. To round out my schedule, I hold weekend seminars such as the one described on this brochure.

TOTAL P.10

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Review and Herald, March 22, 1887

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Hope International

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Eatonville, WA 98328
(206) 832-6602

March 15, 1987

Pastor John Osborne
Prophecy Countdown
2718 Williams Drive
Bonita Springs, FL 33923

Dear John:

As of our meeting together in Greenville, and the tremendous response, it was evident that the people there were very grateful for the messages we brought to them. As I told you on the phone yesterday, what God has called you to do is a very important thing. All of us who have this responsibility must move very cautiously and carefully, and yet boldly. But we must never lean upon our own minds to make decisions. We must be under the control of the Holy Spirit at all times. As I have told you in the past, I am never going to try to regulate you in any way. The only thing is, that when you have involved your ministry with other ministries, you must take those other ministries into consideration, especially when you mention them in your magazine. It would have only been a courtesy to send your material out to the different ones that you are mentioning to let us read it before it went out. I feel guilty because you did put it in my hands for a few brief moments and I started to read it and then we went back to filming so I laid it on your desk. When I came back to get it, evidently you had put it away and I meant to ask you to xerox it so I could take it with me, but forgot. Anyway, what is, is, and as the saying goes, there is no sense crying over what has happened.

"I think there is no question that you will weather it through all right. It is the firm belief of all of those who are involved that you did stub your toe more than you want to believe. You possibly have turned off some good, conservative people who have been supportive of you and have possibly turned on a lot of the fringe group who are saying, 'John, go get them, we stand with you.' Again I must relearn what I told you on the phone. I have watched the ministries of others who have been called, such as Brinsmead. In his first go around in the early 60s he was right on track with the exception of a few minor points on the scaling. There were two groups of people with him. One was the minority group who were trying to keep him in the right direction, but as overwhelming support began to come in, he turned to the minority group and began to say, 'I don't need you. I am going in the right direction. He turned from those who could have helped him and began to move in a direction that was attacking the brethren and the church, fully believing that he had substantiating evidence in the Elijah message which God had given him. But what happened is that his success turned to bitterness and as time went on he became egotistical and he floundered.

When I was in Australia three years ago I drove by his avocado farm which is considered the best avocado ranch in all of Australia because he followed in great detail what Ellen White told us on how to plant an orchard, and yet the man has given up the Sabbath and

has become bitter and lost his soul for eternity. My point is this, John, that there is great danger in what we are all doing. What seemeth right to a man sometimes is colored by what support he is getting. You have risen very fast, but we must not neglect to listen to the minority voices that are around us, for what happened to Brinsmead could happen to any of us who do not listen.

You have claimed as your counselors Joe Crews, Colin Standish, Ralph Larson, and me. All of us feel without a question that you did some damage to yourself in that magazine by bringing the tithe before the people as you did. Even though you have said that you are not soliciting tithe, it is very evident that people will feel you have. If you had left out the cartoon as well as the tithe situation you would have had an excellent magazine.

Preaching the straight testimony or the Elijah message is the same message God has given to the Laodicean church, but please notice that the Elijah message is also a healing message. It is not only a straight testimony, but it is to bring the fathers and the children together. Many people have come to me, both at the Sacramento meeting and at Greenville, and on the phone and have said, "Please help John to not be so strident in what he says. He will accomplish much more if he will do this." They feel that I can help you because you will listen to me. A lot of people who have faithfully supported you are concerned that you are going to cut your ministry short because of the approach you are taking to the message. The straight testimony must be given, but it must also be mingled with the love of Christ and the spirit of Christ. Some have told me that you come on to the point where you almost seem that you are cocky because of the tremendous reaction you have received to your ministry and tapes, that you are feeling that you can do no wrong and this is what God has asked you to do. Some are cautioning you, but because you have so many people on the other side saying, "Go to it, John, you're right on track," there is a danger that you may neglect to contemplate the cautions some of us are trying to bring to you.

What is lacking in your presentation is the righteousness by faith experience which is the three angel's message in verity. We are told in *Evangelism*, 190, that justification, sanctification, and righteousness by faith are the third angel's message in verity and we must not exercise one side of the message to the neglect of the other side because this is where fanaticism begins. And so, as you present your messages, you must mingle them very carefully with justification, sanctification, righteousness by faith, and the how of having victory in the life, because without this you enter into a Jehu type of presentation which will accomplish some things. Elijah, because of his failure at the walls of Jezreel, fled into the wilderness, and because of his failure he was commanded to anoint three different people: Ahazael, Jehu, and Elisha. If he had not failed in his mission he would not have been commissioned to anoint these three people, but we must remember that even though Elijah failed, God still loved Elijah, and allowed him to be translated. I think you need to read what is in *Prophets and Kings* about page 155 on through the next two chapters. I think there are some things there for all of us which we need to look at very carefully. Also, in the book, *Testimonies to Ministers*, John, I want you to study very carefully from 227 onward. This first paragraph reads: "The Lord is soon to work in greater power among us, but there is danger of allowing our impulses to carry us where the Lord would not want us to do. We must not make one step that we will have to retrace. We must move solemnly and prudently and not make use of extravagant expressions or allow our feelings to become overwrought. We must think calmly and work without excitement for there will be those who will become easily wrought up and will catch up unguarded expressions and make use of extreme utterances to create excitement and thus counteract the very work that God would do."

John, it may possibly be worth your consideration to poll some of your board members and also your good supporters and if you find that it runs heavily on the negative side, it may that you should write a letter to your supporters and say that you have had some reaction from different people. Some were offended by the cartoon and the tithe situation, and if



**NORTHWEST HEADQUARTERS
OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS**

APR 12 1990

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April 6, 1990

Elder Lenard D. Jaacks
President
Washington Conference of S.D.A.
20015 Bothell Way S.E.
Bothell, WA 98012

Dear Lenard,

I appreciate the pastoral approach and patience you have exhibited in relation to Hope International.

I continue to wish and pray that Ron Spear and the others there at Hope International will respond positively and chart a course in cooperation with the church. It has been very disappointing to see them persist in a posture that is so negatively critical and undermining.

Ron's view that he has been specifically called to be the agent of the church, and his stated unwillingness to submit his ministry to the wider counsel of the church, is indicative of a basic attitude of opposition to the counsels God has given for His church.

The North American Division has been responsive to our appeal for help in this matter. They have adopted the guidelines that we worked out regarding independent ministries. The BRI has given us a document relating to the unity that is essential for the church to function and fulfill its divinely appointed mission. The BRI, by the way, is still working on independent ministries, so we look forward to further word from them.

The Adventist Review has given an excellent series and we are reprinting these in the Gleaner. My wish and prayer is that those sincere folk who are working for or supporting Hope International will realize that it is a mistake to continue, and that their loyalty should be with the organized body.

We, as you know, also asked the North American Division to indicate how the Division relates to Hope International. I'm enclosing a copy of the letters I received from the officers of NAD.

The NPUC officers concur with their position. We also find it necessary to express our disapproval of the ministry of Hope International. Be assured that we will continue to support and work with the Washington conference and take any steps are deemed necessary to resolve this problem.

any of you were offended, please forgive me. I didn't intend to offend anybody. It might be well for you to give this some consideration because you cannot afford to turn off these conservatives who have been supporting you. I have to tell you again that I have talked to a number of people and some of your supporters are my supporters and I have had 100% negative on the magazine, as regards the title handling and the cartoon. They felt that much of it was good, but they were offended by the things I have mentioned. What I am trying to tell you, John, is that you have to be super careful. Bring into your messages the love of Christ more than you have. Uphold the victory over sin experience, because that is the third angel's message in verity. Look at my book, *Waymarks of Adventism* and study everything I have on perfection and what I have put in my tape on Job the Perfect Man, and put together a message so wherever you preach you can end up giving them hope and the formula for victory over sin. If you do this it will strengthen your ministry. I believe there is no question that Joe, Colin, Ralph and I are not pulling away from you. We will stand with you, but please don't put us in a position where we ever have to make a choice. You must remember we have been called to our ministries as you have been called to yours. We also carry a great responsibility and to say that we would have to choose between our staffs, or take a stand with you would be saying that your ministry was more important than what God has asked us to do. Colin was some disturbed by this. All of us feel responsibility for you. We all have made statements in your presence which to a degree may have helped to fire you up to overemphasize one side of the message to the neglect of the other side. Please forgive us. May God bless you is our prayer. We love you so much. I am sure you will receive this letter in the same spirit it is written. Must close.

Your brother in Christ,

Ron

Ron Spear

RS/cf



IDAHO CONFERENCE OF Seventh-day Adventists

7777 FAIRVIEW AVENUE, P.O. BOX 4878, BOISE, IDAHO 83711 ■ TELEPHONE (208) 375-7524

Elder Lenard Jaacks
April 6, 1990
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I will be out of the country for about a month on an ADRA evaluation tour. You may feel free to communicate with Paul Nelson if there is anything we can do in the next few days to further assist you in this matter.

Thanks again, Lenard, for your faithfulness in this matter.

Yours in the service of our wonderful Saviour,

Bruce Johnston
President

BJ:mm

Enclosures

c: Dennis N. Carlson
Charles E. Bradford
Robert L. Dale
George H. Crumley

August 25, 1992

Elder Bob Dale
North American Division
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

Dear Elder Dale:

Regarding the far right and its influence in the church:

There is little hard data on the influence of Hope International and John Osbourne in the Idaho Conference. Nevertheless, there are some indications that help us understand the impact they are making.

There seems to be an anti-organizational - even anti-social spirit among some members of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Perhaps it is the way we do evangelism but many of our folk have difficulty with trust, organization, and giving each other the benefit of the doubt. Added to this phenomenon is an emphasis on statements of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy that raise a high standard as well as warn of coming apostasy among leadership and we have a volatile mixture internally in the church.

In addition to the above, many do not understand or like the changes that have come into our lives as the result of living in the 1990's. We have people in the church who have lived through the Depression and World War II as well as young adults who have grown up in the 1980's. They really don't see anything alike - time, leisure, money, communication, etc.

The damage Osbourne and Our Firm Foundation does is play upon differences already present in the church by having an exalted standard they can't live up to themselves plus castigating everyone else. It causes confusion and demoralizing influences among members of the church. Our pastors are constantly having to answer these negative influences against the church while they should be doing evangelism and bringing the church together.

UPPER COLUMBIA CONFERENCE

OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

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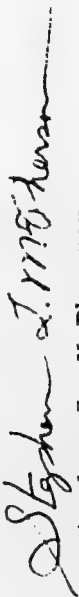
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August 25, 1992

Another trouble with people who follow the extreme right is that they attract zero-based people. Either or people. I win, you loose, black or white. With these folk there is very little or no middle ground. You either agree with them and go along with them or they won't have anything to do with you.

All of this is, I believe, as the devil would have it. Many of the great virtues of Christianity: kindness, compassion, long suffering, forgiveness, and mercy are lost as we produce a meanness of spirit that drives the weaker members of the flock away.

I hope this may be of some help to the church at large. Feel free to use any or all of the above analysis.

Sincerely,


Stephen L. McPherson
President

SM/lh

August 10, 1992

AUG 13 1992

Elder Robert Dale
General Conference of SDA
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

Dear Bob:

Paul Nelson, of the North Pacific Union Conference, reminded us of your interest in a short statement regarding the impact of John Osborne and Hope International in our Conference. Jere asked if I might respond on his behalf.

At the present time we have a few churches only that are facing significant problems as a result of these organizations. Many other churches to do degree or another are aware of the agitation but it does not openly effect the life and ministry of the churches. We have attempted in recent years to keep our pastors and lay elders informed and believe this has helped to minimize the negative impact that might have otherwise occurred.

I trust things are going well for you. It was good to see you at our worship service in New England last fall.

Sincerely,


Bryce Pascoe
Secretary

c



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Robert L. Dale
June 4, 1992
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SOUTHWESTERN UNION CONFERENCE OF
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Office of the President

June 4, 1992 (edited July 6)

FAX No: 301 680-6464

No. Pages Two

TO: Robert L. Dale
North American Division

FROM: Cyril Miller

RE: Information about Hope International

Ron Spear served as a pastor in the Texico Conference during the early 70's. He was very independent and would frequently substitute his program for the conference program. For example, if the conference was recommending special literature for distribution, he would print his own. He was also very legalistic.

The general tenor of his sermons can be summarized by an experience which occurred during prayer meeting when a member of his congregation said, "Pastor Spear, we are all so discouraged because you are giving us the impression you are the only one that is going to heaven." We considered him to be a fanatic, or extremist at best, and were greatly surprised when he was employed by the Review and Herald.

Since then, we have experienced a negative influence in our field with his Firm Foundation publication and some of his Firm Foundation seminars which were conducted by him and Colin Standish.

At first, we thought their Firm Foundation seminar programs were wholesome, but eventually we saw their true colors during a Firm Foundation meeting held in San Antonio. After the presenters had spent some time making the General Conference and the general conditions of the church look like a tragic failure or in gross apostasy, one dear lady stood up in the audience and said, "What can we do about this?" Ron Spear answered, "You can begin with your tithe." After that we sent communications to our Southwestern Union churches not to invite the Firm Foundation seminars anymore.

When this communication went out, one of their seminars was previously scheduled for an Albuquerque, New Mexico church. The pastor was loyal to the conference and cancelled their meetings as recommended. However, Standish and Spear rented another facility and continued with their scheduled event, even though we had told them they were not welcome. It was at that time we felt we should challenge A.S. I. recognition for Heartland Institute because they were working at cross purposes and in contradiction to conference organization.

Since then the Firm Foundation has endeavored to conduct camp meetings at Keene but have attracted very few people. Those who attend are usually sincere, yet somewhat negative toward church organization. They also schedule their camp meetings without any consultation with the conference leaders because it appears that they already know they are totally persona non-grata. The Firm Foundation magazine is read widely and some appear to prefer it to the Adventist Review because of its Spirit of Prophecy emphasis and paradoxically their criticisms against the church.

Here's hoping this information will be helpful to you.

Sincerely your friend,

Cyril

Cyril Miller
President

m

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"frequently," "often," "not uncommon," and "many." This makes for sensational reporting, and may be appropriate for use in a gossip column, but should have no part in the message coming from the chosen people of Revelation 14 "in whose mouth in found no guile."

It is true that your publication gives no names or specific incidents. It would be much less offensive if it did. The evils reported could then be dealt with, or at least investigated. By speaking in generalities the statements cast a general shadow on the church and its leadership. The readers, not knowing whom these things refer to, look upon all church members and leaders with suspicion, and innocent people must share with the evil-doers in the damage done to their reputation.

It is cruel to hint and insinuate, as though you knew a great deal in regard to this friend or that acquaintance of which others are ignorant. *Such hints go further, and create more unfavorable impressions, than to frankly relate the facts in an unexaggerated manner.* What harm has not the church of Christ suffered from these things! The inconsistent, unguarded course of her members has made her weak as water. Confidence has been betrayed by members of the same church, and yet the guilty did not design to do mischief. (2T186 emphasis supplied)

After a difficult struggle, I feel that I must go on record. Painful as it may be, there are times that sin must be called by its right name. I have two reasons for doing this.

1. I am perfectly convinced that you sincerely believe you are not criticizing, undermining or harming the church. I pray that I may be used by the Lord to point out things that you may have been unaware of.
2. There is no question in my mind that innocent souls are being led astray by the kind of publication I have just read. If the errors I am going to point out are not corrected, I feel that it is important that these people be warned.

Four Areas of Concern:

1. **A Wrong Emphasis:** The preaching of the everlasting Gospel, the publishing of glad tidings, is not enhanced by a constant rehearsing of the negative aspects of the ministry and the members of the church. That there are problems, we cannot deny. To dwell on these problems is to lose sight of the only perfect Example we have. We are given direct and pointed counsel in this respect. This kind of sensational reporting may increase the popularity of the journal, but it is not a wholesome diet for Christians.

Those who live upon the husks of other's failings and deficiencies, and who gather to themselves the unwholesome miasma of their neighbors' neglects and shortcomings, making themselves church scavengers, are no advantage to the society of which they form a part, but are an actual burden to the community upon which they inflict themselves. (4T194)

As men lose their first love, they do not keep the commandments of God, and then they begin to criticize one another. *This spirit will constantly be striving for the mastery to the close of time.* Satan is seeking to foster it, in order that brethren in their ignorance may seek to devour one another. God is not glorified, but greatly dishonored; the Spirit of God is grieved. Satan exults, because he knows that if he can set brother to watch brother in the church and in the ministry, some will be so disheartened and discouraged as to leave their posts of duty. This is not the work of the Holy Spirit; a power from beneath is working in the chambers of the mind and in the soul-temple, to place his attributes where the attributes of Christ should be. (TM 189 emphasis supplied)

June 29, 1989

Elder Ron Spear
Hope International
P. O. Box 940
Eatonville, WA 98328

Dear Ron:

From one self-supporting worker to another:

The time for fellowship and open discussion that we spent together in Lansing was pleasant. It was especially encouraging to hear your assurance that you don't attack or undermine the church.

I had seen *Our Firm Foundation* a few times, but don't remember ever receiving a copy, or reading one from cover to cover. After carefully reading the June issue that you gave me, I can assure you that some of the material was good. Luther Warren's sermon was especially inspirational, as was that of Meade MacGuire. Ellen G. White's writings are always helpful and inspirational.

Unfortunately I had real problems, especially with two of the articles, which I felt set a depressing tone to the publication. My experience in the church, my constant travels, my work with ministers and lay members assures me that the picture that is transmitted through your magazine is not a true one. My heart goes out to those who read this paper and do not have the knowledge to analyze the statements properly. To intersperse these statements with the good articles adds credibility to them. I wonder if Luther Warren, Meade MacGuire or especially Ellen G. White, none of whom ever participated in this kind of reporting, would have appreciated their articles being used in that way.

Risking the danger of being greatly misunderstood, being labeled as someone who defends evil in the church, a "sin and live" theologian, a liberal, a "rabid" preacher of the "New Theology," or someone who does not give the "Straight Testimony," I feel impelled to write this letter to you. This is not done because I ignore the problems in the church. I recognize that the enemy is very active, working harder than ever before in God's church. This should not surprise any of us, as it is a fulfillment of the prophecy of the Laodicean message.

I made a list of over 40 negative statements in the June, 1989 issue of *Our Firm Foundation*. These statements, according to my view, can not help but undermine the confidence of the brethren in the Adventist leadership, ministry and their fellow members. These statements cite examples of the terrible things that are being done by Adventists, and if all of those things are true, though no documentation or proof is given, they are based on isolated incidents. The impression given is that these practices are general, as they are spoken of with the use of expressions like

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But these unruly talkers will fasten upon the more disagreeable features of the work, even as the lichen clings to the roughness of the rock. These persons are spiritually dwarfed by continually dwelling upon the failing and faults of others. They are morally incapable of discerning good and noble actions, unselfish endeavors, true heroism, and self-sacrifice. (4T196 emphasis supplied)

Glorify God or the enemy? When I was in California, I was told by some people that they have stopped reading the *Review* and replaced it with *Our Firm Foundation*, because they felt that the latter had more to offer. Since then I have heard other similar comments, and so I decided to compare a random issue of the *Review* (June 29) with the June *Our Firm Foundation*. Both carried some excellent articles. Here is a comparison of the type of tidings carried by the two journals:

The Adventist Review

Many new missionary families say "good-bye" to their loved-ones as they go and serve in foreign fields. (p. 5)

132 baptized in one single crusade in Rwanda, plus another 100 people being baptized as a result of 25 Revelation Seminars in the same country. (p. 6)

65,786 baptized in Inter-America in five months. (p. 6)

400 new members baptized in a crusade in Montego Bay, Jamaica. (p. 6)

51 new classrooms built in Uganda by Adra. (P. 6)

1,200-square feet added to the Good Neighbor Center in Lincoln, Nebraska (p. 7).

Successful Adventist businessmen witnessing to their community in an unusual way (pp. 8-10).

A non-Adventist study reporting that because of the Adventist life-style, the life expectancy of a 35-year-old Seventh-day Adventist male is 8.9 years longer than that of the average American male (pp. 15-19).

2 million blind and 3.5 million deaf served by Christian Record in the Philippines, while 114 field representatives visit more than 45,000 blind people each year across America (pp. 20,21).

After reading the reports in the *Adventist Review* my heart is filled with praise to God, and I am compelled to exclaim, "What God hath wrought!" After reading

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the bad news in *Our Firm Foundation*, a deadly depression makes me feel like saying, "An enemy hath done this!" What the devil is doing is highly emphasized and the impression is given that God is not working in the church at all. The evil is accentuated and the good is suppressed.

Even the intentional suppression of truth, by which injury may result to others, is a violation of the ninth commandment. (PP 309)

2. Undermining the faith of the brethren: Not only do the kind of negative reports fail to uplift, they actually do a lot of harm. In my reading of the inspired counsel given to the church I see two real dangers in what your magazine is doing:

A. Those who read these reports have their faith undermined causing them to be discouraged.

Many who profess to gather with Christ are scattering from Him. That is why the church is so weak. Many indulge freely in criticism and accusing. By giving expression to suspicion, jealousy, and discontent, they yield themselves as instruments of Satan. Before they realize what they are doing, the adversary has through them accomplished his purpose. The impression of evil has been made, the shadow has been cast, the arrows of Satan have found their mark. Distrust, unbelief, and downright infidelity have fastened upon those who otherwise might have accepted Christ. Meanwhile the workers for Satan look complacently upon those whom they have driven to skepticism, and who are now hardened against reproof and entreaty. They flatter themselves that in comparison with these souls they are virtuous and righteous. They do not realize that these sad wrecks of character are the work of their own unbridled tongues and rebellious hearts. It is through their influence that these tempted ones have fallen. (COL 340,341)

An added burden upon faithful workers:

B. It places an added burden upon the workers in God's cause. Time that could be spent winning souls is spent encouraging those who have fallen prey to this spirit of criticism and restore the confidence God's true church. The criticism also discourages workers. Our inspired counsel tells us that "The church is in need, not of burdens but of earnest workers; not of faultfinders, but of builders in Zion."

3 False Witness: The reports given are not an accurate picture of the church they describe. Gross exaggerations, insinuations, innuendos and omissions are just as much a part of false witness as are direct outright lies.

Closely allied to gossip is the covert insinuation, the sly innuendo, by which the unclean in heart seek to insinuate the evil they dare not openly express. Every approach to these practices the youth should be taught to shun as they would shun the leprosy. (Education, 236)

An intention to deceive is what constitutes falsehood. By a glance of the eye, a motion of the hand, an expression of the countenance, a falsehood may be told as effectually as by words. All intentional overstatement, every hint or insinuation calculated to convey an erroneous or exaggerated impression, even the statement of facts in such a manner as to mislead, is falsehood. This precept forbids every effort to injure our neighbor's reputation by misrepresentation or evil surmising, by slander or tale bearing. (PP 309)

4. Disrespect for what is sacred: There is a new wave of disrespect for things which God calls sacred. I am old fashioned enough to believe that God's Church and His anointed ministry are sacred, and even when in error should not be dealt with in a common unholy manner. As a boy I was taught that it is a Bible principle to respect God's anointed. The example of David's dealings with the wicked King Saul were impressed on my mind at an early age. Has "straight testimony" theology

Our Firm Foundation

Half of our worldwide members and 60 percent of our North-American members are not in church on a given Sabbath (P. 31) ...

Many preachers enamored with the New Theology given evidence to their "love" theology by infidelity to their wives, marital breakup and drunkenness, causing horrendous carnage (p. 17).

The condoning of the use of alcohol, homosexual relationships, and Jewelry in all its forms (p. 12).

Much of Adventism "besotted with fear of judgmentalism."

70% of Adventist American youth leaving the church. (p. 13)

Dramatic changes for the worse in the Adventist church (p.12).

A "thickening crisis atmosphere and the loss of church members' confidence" in our educational and medical institutions (p. 12).

The subtle sin-and-live theology has such appeal that it is common for errant pastors to obtain major support from congregations (p. 17).

Adventist services contaminated with a contemporary band, synthesizers, electric guitars and hand clapping during Sabbath service.

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changed this principle? Are we now to ignore the inspired testimony of Ellen White in this regard?

There may be unworthy ones connected with the ministry, yet no one can ignore the ministry without ignoring God. (8T160,161)

The names of God's chosen servants have been handled with disrespect, and in some cases with absolute contempt, by certain persons whose duty it is to uphold them. (4T195)

To accuse and criticize those whom God is using, is to accuse and criticize the Lord, who has sent them. (TM 566)

What does she say about the sacredness of the church? I know that you are well acquainted with the statements that I am presenting here. You've read them many times. I ask you to prayerfully read them in the context of the subject we are talking about.

"There will be messages of accusation against the people of God, similar to the work done by Satan in accusing God's people, and these messages will be sounding at the very time when God is saying to His people, 'Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.'" (Testimonies to Ministers, pages 41-47)

"Although there are evils existing in the church, and will be until the end of the world, the church in these last days is to be the light of the world that is polluted and demoralized by sin. The church, enfeebled and defective, needing to be reformed, warned, and counselled, is the only object upon earth upon which Christ bestows His supreme regard." (Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, September 5, 1893.)

I truly believe that the majority of Seventh-day Adventist ministers love the Lord, are sincere, many of them making great sacrifices to preach the truth. Certainly there are exceptions, but I rub shoulders with workers who are willing to hazard their lives for the cause of God. It is very rare that I ever meet a worker that comes anywhere close to falling into the picture painted in *Our Firm Foundation*. Not only the workers, but everywhere I go I meet God's wonderful people, who faithfully follow the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

Here are a few examples of what I consider to be irresponsible declarations that should have no part in any Christian publication.

1 Illicit sex and drunkenness in the ministry:

"There is no way one can preach the sin-and-live theology without eventually falling into deep sin. Thus many of those enamored with the New Theology, evidence the emptiness of their "love" theology by their infidelity to their wives and by marital breakup and even drunkenness. The carnage in this area is horrendous." (*Our Firm Foundation*, p. 17, emphasis supplied)

I have been a part of the Seventh-day Adventist ministry for 37 years. My work as an evangelist has taken me to many parts of the world, and through evangelistic campaigns I become very well acquainted with different churches in North America. Before reading this article I had never heard of the "sin and live" theology.

The innocent reader of your magazine could only come to one conclusion by the reading of this statement. Many preachers preach a "sin and live" theology, and many of them are guilty of sexual immorality and drunkenness.

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In all of my years in the ministry, I have never met a Seventh-day Adventist minister who uses alcoholic beverages in any form, much less one that could be accused of drunkenness. I have consulted friends who are well travelled, and like me, they are completely unaware of the "many" problems of drunkenness in the Adventist ministry.

If the author of this article knows of some minister who is guilty of drunkenness, it would certainly be his duty to deal directly with that person according to Matthew 18. I see no edification to the church or the cause of God in publishing the report. As to the many such cases that are causing this "horrendous carnage" in the church, unless I can be given some facts to prove this, I consider this statement a gross exaggeration.

As to sexual infidelity, in the last 37 years I have been aware of occasional ministers who have fallen into this temptation and had to be dropped from the ministry. These problems are not new. As we come closer to the end of time the Devil will work harder than ever, and every Christian must remain close to God so that he will not fall.

I am not sure that you can trace the moral casualties in the ministry to the "New Theology." Are the more conservative brethren immune from this temptation. It wouldn't be difficult to show that those who preach what is referred to as "straight testimony" have also been known to fall.

2. Sinful practices given official sanction:

"There is a growing number of sinful practices which are condoned, some of them with official sanction, such as the moderate use of alcohol, increased pressure to accept monogamous homosexual relationships, and the swelling popularity of jewelry in all its forms. (*Our Firm Foundation*, p. 12, emphasis supplied)

Three sinful practices are cited here as growing in number, some of them which are condoned with official sanction, and others are just condoned. As the statement doesn't say which ones receive official sanction, the reader is left to wonder and suspect.

The idea of this growing number of these cases gives the picture to the reader that these things are widespread occurrences. I would like to ask the author of the article:

A. How many Adventist communities, churches, or Conferences, do you know that condone (officially or unofficially) the practice of the moderate use of alcohol? If the number is growing as rapidly as the statement implies I can't help wondering why I have never heard of a single instance of this practice being condoned by any part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

B. How many Adventist communities, churches, or Conferences do you know that condone increased pressure to accept monogamous homosexual relationships? The statement is worded carefully, so that it doesn't say that homosexual relationships are condoned, but the pressure to accept them is condoned. How many casual readers would miss this, carrying away the impression that homosexuality is commonly accepted in the Adventist church.

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C. To say that there is a swelling popularity of jewelry in all its forms, is an unfortunate truth. Does the church condone this, officially or unofficially? Not that I know of. If the church's re-affirmation of its original stand on the wedding ring is being referred to, this is not a change. More than thirty years ago, when we first went to the mission field, we were guided by the words of wisdom given in *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 181, where Ellen White, speaking of our people in some foreign countries, said she had "no burden to condemn those who have their marriage ring." As far as I know, this has always been the position of the church.

It is a position that Ellen White supported. When her son, W. C. White was married in Tasmania, Mrs. White participated in the ceremony. As they were married in a British country, they were married with the wedding ring. At first the bride was concerned about the position Ellen White would take. She talked it over with her future mother-in-law, and on February 13, 1895, she wrote to William:

I have talked with your mother on the matter of a wedding ring and showed her what you said on the subject. She says she has no objection whatever to my wearing one. (Arthur L. White, Ellen G. White: Volume 4, The Australian Years, p. 196)

3. Adventist Administrators don't search for truth:

"Most administrators are imprisoned by the number of committees that they must attend. Thus their own searching for truth is spasmodic." (*Our Firm Foundation*, page 17, emphasis supplied)

A part of this statement is undoubtedly true. I believe that most administrators have a lot of committees they must attend. It does not follow that the second part of this statement is also true. This serious accusation is a half-truth. It implies, that most of the administrators of the Seventh-day Adventist Church neglect their devotional lives.

My question to the author is: "Do you have some statistics on which to base this accusation, or are you stating a personal opinion?" I feel compelled to challenge the statement. Unless I can see in the results of a questionnaire, showing how much time each administrator spends in personal study, I refuse to believe it.

The majority of the administrators I have dealt with are giants in the study of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. In my travels with Adventist administrators I have observed their study habits. I don't claim to know them all, and no doubt there are administrators of the organization as well as of self-supporting organizations who neglect their devotional time. I don't believe that it is "most" of them."

4. The Caring Church:

"Much of the implied, if not explicit message of contemporary Adventism declares that the doctrinal and moral assertiveness of days gone by has now been replaced by a loosely defined emphasis on caring." (*Our Firm Foundation*, p. 14)

This little dig at the slogan of the North American Division on *The Caring Church* is a gross misrepresentation of what was meant by it. There was nothing there that implied or gave an explicit message of doctrinal change or a lack of moral assertiveness.

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5. Pastors teaching false doctrine are often told that the leadership is behind them:

"Pastors teaching New Theology are often told simply to be careful, often with the assurance that leadership is fully behind them." (*Our Firm Foundation*, p. 17, emphasis supplied)

Once again, the undocumented form of presenting this charge makes it impossible to prove whether anything of the sort has ever happened. The burden of proof that this kind of thing happens "often," falls on the one making the accusation.

This statement pictures Adventist administrators in the worst possible light. I have been in the work too long to believe in the infallibility of leadership in the church, or in the self-supporting organizations for that matter. The kind of scenario pictured here is so far out of character even of the worst administrators that I have ever met, that I couldn't possibly be naive enough to believe that it happens often, unless I was to see some absolute proof.

Here I am asked to believe, and I meet uninformed people who read these things and take them at their face value, that Adventist leaders are telling the ministers to preach error "carefully" and that they can count on the support of their leaders in the preaching of error. If there is any truth in this statement it should certainly not be published. That statement would be enough to shake the faith of any honest person.

6. Reducing the role of Ellen White:

"Much has lately been said of how the Bible alone should be the Adventist rule of faith and practice - too often these words are spoken more to reduce the role of Ellen White than to increase respect for the Bible." (*Our Firm Foundation*, p. 12, emphasis supplied)

This statement doesn't say by whom "much has been said." It implies that it is by the leadership of the church. It is another example of gossip column style innuendos, being ambiguous enough to protect the writer, yet suggestive enough to cast a shadow of doubt upon the church. As far as I know the church has never tried to increase respect for the Bible at the expense of the role of Ellen White. The church spends large amounts of money and effort maintaining Ellen G. White research centers and promoting the Spirit of Prophecy. The statement simply is not true.

7. Official statement of belief leaves pivotal doctrines ambiguous:

"The official Seventh-day Adventist statement of beliefs is couched in such a way that pivotal doctrines such as victorious Christian living, the nature of Christ and the atonement are left sufficiently general that all but the most rabid New Theology teachers can give confident assent to them. Thus it is hard to take strong action against them." (*Our Firm Foundation*, p. 31)

The strong implication is that with the appearance of this "New Theology" the church has modified its official statement of beliefs. My question is, "when did this modification take place?" I have compared our latest statement of beliefs with the earliest I can find. I fail to see that it is more "general" than it ever has been. If the Adventist statement of beliefs is causing the problem, we must have had "rabid New

1. "If after listening to three or more sermons you do not know what the pastor believes or where he stands, it is likely that he does not have true convictions concerning truth."

Any evangelist who follows the counsel of Ellen White would certainly be classified as one who "does not have true convictions concerning truth." Your readers are told not to trust a minister who does not preach testing truths within his first three sermons. God's messenger says something quite the opposite:

Let our ministers bear in mind that the strongest meat is not to be given to babes who know not the first principles of truth as we believe it. In every age the Lord has had a special message for the people of that time; so we have a message for the people of this age. But while we have many things to say, we may be compelled to withhold some of them for a time, because the people are not prepared to receive them now. (Review and Herald, Oct. 14, 1902)

In laboring in a new field, do not think it your duty to say at once to the people, We are Seventh-day Adventists; we believe that the seventh day is the Sabbath; we believe in the nonimmortality of the soul. This would often erect a formidable barrier between you and those you wish to reach. Speak to them, as you have opportunity, upon points of doctrine on which you can agree. Dwell on the necessity of practical godliness. Give them evidence that you are a Christian, desiring peace, and that you love their souls. Let them see that you are conscientious. Thus you will gain their confidence; and there will be time enough for doctrines. Let the heart be won, the soil prepared, and then sow the seed, presenting in love the truth as it is in Jesus. (Gospel Workers, 119,120)

Do not at the outset press before the people the most objectionable features of our faith, lest you close their hearts to which these things come as a new revelation. Let such portions of truth be dealt out to them as they may be able to grasp and appreciate; (General Conference Bulletin, Feb. 25, 1895)

2. "If the theme of the sermons is constantly love outside the context of God's law, he is certainly strongly drawn to the New Theology."

Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, "It is the third angel's message in verity." (Review and Herald, April 1, 1890)

These are our themes - Christ crucified for our sins, Christ risen from the dead, Christ our intercessor before God; and closely connected with these is the office work of the Holy Spirit, the representative of Christ, sent forth with divine power and gifts for men. (Letter 86, 1895)

His pre-existence, His coming the second time in glory and power, His personal dignity, His holy law uplifted, are the themes that have been dwelt upon with simplicity and power. (Letter 83, 1895)

Bear with a certain voice an affirmative message. Lift Him up, the Man of Calvary, higher and still higher. There is power in the exaltation of the cross of Christ. (Letter 65, 1905)

Support or undermine the ministry?

You told us that people send you their tithe because their conscience will not allow them to send it to the church. Now I see the reason. If the diet of my reading was what your readers got in the June issue, believing that it is common for Adventist leaders to be drunkards, unfaithful to their wives and homosexuals, and that they are told by their leaders to be careful how they present error, but to go on presenting it with the backing of the leadership, I'm afraid that I would take the same position. Who is responsible for their conscience to be educated in that way?

Theology" teachers back in the times of the pioneers, as the statement of beliefs hasn't changed.

Adventist Youth:

Twice in the paper it is asserted that 70% of our young people are leaving the church. No documentation is given for this statistic. It is heartbreaking for Christian parents to lose their children to the world. We are told that this is a fruit of the "New Theology," which would make conservative Adventists immune to this heartache. I would like to see some statistic to prove this.

Unless Ellen White was very wrong in her inspired perceptions, what your publication is doing is the most harmful thing that can be done for our young people. She has a great deal to say about the effect of criticizing the leadership of the church has upon our young people. Just the other day, on reading about the problems in Battle Creek, I came upon this interesting statement.

Do not, I beg of you, instill into the minds of the students ideas that will cause them to lose confidence in God's appointed ministers. But this you are most certainly doing, whether you are aware of it or not. (8T 160,161)

An Obstruction to true worship:

Our Firm Foundation encourages its readers to identify the "New Theology" teachers by carefully analyzing their sermons. No longer do the members come to worship God or to be fed, but rather to criticize the sermon and identify the preacher's theological position.

Eight tests are given to identify the preachers of the New Theology. These tests are based on human opinion to which the authors are certainly entitled. I would, however, prefer to look at the inspired tests.

The conversion of sinners, and their sanctification is the greatest proof a minister can have that God has called him to the ministry. If these evidences attend his labors, he needs no further recommendation. (Ellen G. White, "The Evidence of Apostleship," The Review and Herald, April 15, 1902)

Evidently according to Ellen White, ministers don't have to have to pass those eight tests. But there is a test which all ministers should pass.

If after laboring for twelve months in evangelistic work a man has no fruit to show for his efforts, if the people for whom he has labored are not benefited, if he has not lifted the standard in new places, and no souls are converted by his labors, that man should humble his heart before God, and endeavor to know if he has not mistaken his calling. The wages paid by the conference should be given to those who show fruit for their labors. (Evangelism, p. 686)

As a boy I listened to great preachers of the past, some of them Ellen White's contemporaries. Not too many of them would have passed the first two of these tests. You need only to read some of Ellen White's Camp Meeting sermons to see by these tests she would have been classified as a New Theology preacher. According to these tests, Waggoner and Jones taught the "New Theology." Certainly Jesus wouldn't have met the scrutiny of the author of this article.

Here is one of the man-made tests advocated for people to "test" their pastors:

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What would happen if the thousands of dollars spent to publish the sins of the people were spent on preaching the good news of the everlasting gospel? What is being presented in these articles is not present truth. It isn't truth at all. It is not the everlasting gospel. It certainly has nothing to do with "our firm foundation." I thank God that His church is not based on that kind of a foundation.

The more I read about Ellen G. White's position on the use of tithe, the more I believe that she taught that it should go to the organized church. That it was to be used to support the ministry we all agree. That it should be used to undermine the ministry is definitely wrong!

The Changing Church: I see in *Our Firm Foundation* a high emphasis on the changes in the church. Devin D. Paulson's article stresses the negative, completely ignoring what God is doing in His changing church.

Why should we be surprised when Laodicean conditions in the church fulfill the prophecies of Revelation 3? Yes, the church has changed since the time of my youth. Many of the changes have been deteriorating. We know we are living near the end of time. There have also been changes for the better.

1. In the days of Ellen White our publishing houses were doing commercial printing which included immoral, spiritualistic and other objectionable reading matter. It took time to accept Sister White's counsel, but today our publishing houses no longer do that.

2. I have seen our denomination become more conscious of the health-message. Though there are and always have been those who are lax in this respect, in places where, when I was younger, vegetarianism was rare, it has now become almost general.

3. Administrators used to be so busy in their offices that it was rare to see them out in the field winning souls. It is becoming more and more common for presidents to go out into the field and conduct evangelistic meetings. Recently, when I was in Alberta, the President of the Conference was working in a little town, knocking on doors and publicly preaching the Third Angel's Message. At the same time, the secretary of the Lake Union was in South Bend, and one of the General Conference administrators was in Brazil where he baptized over 100 souls. If you would include these stories in your paper, it might help to counter-balance some of the negative statements.

4. When I went to school it was unheard of for students to be encouraged and helped in door to door soul-winning. Just a few weeks ago I listened to the report of the students of one of our large academies, where a large percent of the students use their recreational time to go out to the community giving Bible studies to non-Adventists. On page 14 of *Our Firm Foundation* the question is asked, "Are Adventist Youth who embrace the liberal spirit more excited about helping their neighbors with problems than about material and professional success?" I don't think that these Adventist Youth embrace a liberal spirit, but they certainly are concerned about helping their neighbors, and with tear-filled eyes they are presenting candidates for baptism.

5. When I first went to the mission field, much of the leadership roles had to be taken by the American missionaries. Now in countries that we used to call "mission fields" national workers have taken over the work and become powerful witnesses for Christ. The work is growing faster than it ever has. In my recent visit

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to Brazil I was once again completely enthralled by the phenomenal power of the Holy Spirit in the growth of the church.

Publication in Brazil:

I highly object to your translating this kind of literature to the Portuguese language. The work is being greatly blessed in Brazil, growing in a phenomenal way. The Spirit of Prophecy carries a high priority among our Brazilian people. Must our ministers, who are burdened with as many as six or seven churches, be diverted from their soul-winning efforts by having to undo the work of these subtle innuendos and insinuations?

I have seen the work of a sect called *The Reformed Adventists* who carried on a similar campaign year after year. They turned many souls away from the truth by their accusations. Most of them were very similar to what we have seen in your magazine. It made the work of evangelism much more difficult.

Before you go any further in your plans to publish in Brazil, please read the following passage

One thing all can do: They can avoid making the work of others unnecessarily hard by scrutinizing their efforts, putting stones in front of the car their brethren are trying to push uphill. If any are unwilling to put their shoulder to the wheel, let them at least refrain from hindering those who are working. God calls for laborers who will refuse to discourage their fellow laborers. (7T238)

I saw that the minds of some in the church have not run in the right channel. There have been some peculiar temperaments that have had their notions by which to measure their brethren. And if any did not exactly agree with them, there was trouble in the camp at once. Some have strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel.

These set notions have been humored and indulged altogether too long. There has been a picking at straws. And when there were no real difficulties in the church, trials have been manufactured. The minds of the church and the servants of the Lord are called from God, truth, and heaven to dwell upon darkness. Satan delights to have such things go on; it feasts him. But these are none of the trials which are to purify the church and that will in the end increase the strength of God's people.

I saw that some are withering spiritually. They have lived some time watching to keep their brethren straight - watching for every fault to make trouble with them. And while doing this, their minds are not on God, nor on heaven, nor on the truth; but just where Satan wants them - on someone else. Their souls are neglected; they seldom see or feel their own faults, for they have had enough to do to watch the faults of others without so much as looking to their own souls or searching their own hearts. A person's dress, bonnet or apron takes their attention. They must talk to this one or that one, and it is sufficient to dwell upon for weeks. I saw that all the religion a few poor souls have consists in watching the garments and acts of others, and finding fault with them. Unless they reform, there will be no place in heaven for them, for they would find fault with the Lord Himself. (Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, Volume 1, pp. 114,145)

It is hard for me to understand why certain people can't see the triumphs of Christ's church, but are obsessed by the negative. It illustrates a little verse I read early in life:

Two men looked through prison bars,
One saw mud, the other saw stars.



ARTS INTERNATIONAL

P.O. Box 70, Berrien Springs, MI 49103

September 5, 1990

Elder William G. Johnson
C/O Adventist Review
55 West Oak Ridge Drive
Hagerstown, MD 21740

Dear Elder Johnson:

The series of articles on Independent Ministries by Joe Engelkemier was appreciated. Being the founder of an independent evangelistic outreach, I found the presentations very timely. I have found the critical attitude toward the leadership of God's church which is instigated by some organizations highly offensive.

Your introductory remarks summarize a position we have endorsed for many years. Quoting your words:

However, we cannot give our blessing to every independent ministry or its publication. When we find any of the following elements present, we think that ministry is out of line and does not deserve the support of members:

The three elements you present are (1) Solicitation or acceptance of tithe, (2) Being critical of the church, its leaders, and its ministers, (3) Polarizing rather than building.

I seem to be getting a mixed message, when I see the Review allowing ministries that contain all three of the above elements, to be given advertising space in our official church publication. Large promotions, like the entire back page of the Review, give the readers the impression of an endorsement. (The July 12, 1990 General Conference Report, p. 15 and back cover)

Many of our people do not realize that these are paid advertisements, and accept these promotions as official sanction by the church. Yet, both of the organizations advertised promote diversion of tithe, have been highly critical of the leadership of the church in their publications, and are guilty of polarizing, to the point of dividing churches and causing our pastors in the field untold anguish, rather than helping in their work.

From what I see as I work in the field, it is my belief that the effect that the critical organizations are having on our people is far greater than our leadership realizes. The amount of tithe dollars being diverted from God's church is astronomical. One organization alone, according to information that I believe is dependable, is receiving approximately one million dollars a year, mostly tithe money from our people.

The critical attitude toward the leadership of the church is spreading at an alarming rate. Some of the books published by organizations who advertise in the Review, help to foment this caustic spirit. This results in added burdens to the work of evangelism, as new members brought into the church are immediately poisoned by those who have become bitter.

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Could it be that evil is often in the eyes of the beholder? All of us are tempted by the devil to become critical. Another verse has been helpful to me when these temptations come:

There is so much bad in the best of us
And so much good in the worst of us
That it hardly behooves any of us
To talk about the rest of us.

Finally, brethren, the inspired words of the Apostle resound in my ears. These words should guide the reporting of any tidings, whether they be verbally transmitted or published.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. (Philippians 4:8)

Very sincerely your brother in Christ,

Henry Feyerabend

Dave Fiedler
Glenn Aufderhar
Dwight Hall
Bill Smith

cc

ADVENTIST REVIEW

General Paper of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

October 8, 1990

Henry Feyerabend
Arts International Destiny
P. O. Box 70
Berrien Springs, MI 49103

Dear Brother Feyerabend:

Greetings in Jesus' love!

Thank you for your letter of September 5. It arrived at our office only on September 18, which shows, I suppose, the decline and fall of the United States Postal System! Anyway, I read the material with deep interest. I want to tell you it brought me great encouragement. Thank you!

You made a good point about our advertising in the Review. We try to be careful, and in fact turn back quite a few would-be advertisers. When we have institutions and organizations outside the official network, we consult with the North American Division before we accept the ad.

Now, concerning the two ads you mentioned in particular. Amazing Facts ministry is a special case. While it does receive tithe from our people, it is linked directly with the Chesapeake Conference—its workers are paid by the conference. Like you I've been troubled by some of the material that has come out from Amazing Facts, but so long as this ministry maintains its close relationship with the conference, it can make a strong case that we should accept its advertising. Perhaps the leadership in North America needs to review the relationship of this ministry to the conference; that should be the first stage in any reconsideration of their status with us as an advertiser. The second ad you pointed out came from Hartland. You'd be interested to know that they wanted three different ads placed with us, but after consultation with our NAD leaders we accepted only the one that dealt with their health program. I can assure you that the Hartland authorities let me know they were unhappy about our turning down the other ads! Hartland is also causing much concern in the field, and perhaps we were unwise to run even the ad we did. Perhaps we are sending mixed signals to our people. I think the time is approaching very fast when the North American Division leadership will have to come to terms with the status of Hartland and its workers.

A number of recent experiences have caused me deep distress in this respect. When working with the critical element, I am repeatedly reminded that these ministries are endorsed by the leadership of the church. I find it hard to understand how the Adventist Review would refuse to give its blessing to certain independent ministries, discourage people from supporting them, while at the same time promoting their work by giving them prominent advertising space.

I am enclosing a copy of a letter which I wrote to one of the independent ministries. For reasons that I will not go into at this moment, I didn't mail the letter, though I have every reason to believe that the person it was addressed to is in possession of a copy. My reason for sending you a copy of this letter is to illustrate the nature of criticism in an article written by the director of one of the ministries you advertise in the Review.

I love the Adventist church. I love the Adventist Review. Please accept my comments, not as negative criticism, but as a concern for the work of God's church.

Very sincerely yours,

Henry Feyerabend
Henry Feyerabend

P.S. We have been enjoying your devotional book each morning. A recent reading contained a gem that is appropriate to the subject of this letter. "Instead of cursing the darkness, light a candle." All of us know that our leadership is human, that there are problems in the church. Instead of dwelling on the darkness, I want to be busy lighting candles.

Henry Feyerabend

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October 5, 1990

I was intrigued by your analysis of the material carried in Our Firm Foundation. It is the best I've seen. I have had an identical impression of Our Firm Foundation, but I've chosen not to go on the attack. Although I have been pained and burdened by this journal, after much prayer I decided that we should go ahead with our mission, not letting Our Firm Foundation or any other body set our agenda, but giving our people the message that we think the Lord wants us to sound at this time. But you are absolutely right: trying to deal with the negative material that gets into the hands of our people at times is an enormous drain on physical and emotional resources. When I see the state of society, the desperate problems of men and women of all ages, I wish we could come together in the church to urge forward the ministry of healing and hope that the Lord has given us.

Again, dear brother, my deep appreciation for the letter and the enclosed material. I hope we can meet some time.

With every good wish.

Sincerely your brother,



William G. Johnsson
Editor, ADVENTIST REVIEW

cb

APPENDIX XX

**OSBORNE LETTER OF INTENT TO LEAVE MINISTRY
ROGERS LETTER OF TERMINATION DATE**

September 7, 1984

Pastor John W. Osborne, Jr.
September 7, 1984
Page 2

'May the Lord continue to bless you, John, as you endeavor to serve Him. If you wish to write a response to this letter for the benefit of the Committee, I shall be happy to hear from you.

Yours most sincerely,



H. J. Carubba, President

mlc

xc O. O. Graham

FLORIDA CONFERENCE *of Seventh-day Adventists*



Pastor John W. Osborne, Jr.
1940 Curling Avenue
Naples, Florida 33942

Dear John:

It was good to see you and Diane last week in discussion of your plans to go independent with the Prophecy Countdown telecast.

Word has come to me that you have given the impression the conference is in full agreement with this decision. I think there needs to be a clarification of our position with regard to this matter.

In the first place, John, the Florida Conference administration, in counsel with the Southern Union Conference and the General Conference leadership, rejected this proposal. This is not to say the opportunity was not worth consideration. However, because Prophecy Countdown has not had sufficient time to become adequately established, we feel the plan is very pre-mature.

As you are aware, we urged you to instead syndicate the program and make it available to those areas where pastors and churches are willing to give it full support. It was only after your apparent unwillingness to follow this counsel that administration reluctantly agreed to wish for you success in your independent venture.

As I stated to you, our next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for October 2. At that time we shall be happy to give consideration to your request to be granted a leave of absence from the ministry. This, of course, will be without any obligation on the part of the Florida Conference for future employment.

P.O. Box 1313
616 E. Rollins Street
Orlando, Fla. 32802

Phone (305) 898-7521

Seventh-day Adventist Church



1055 PINE RIDGE ROAD
NAPLES, FLORIDA 33940
PHONE: (813) 597-5936

September 30, 1984

Elder Henry J. Carubba
President
Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventist
P.O. Box 1313
Orlando, Florida 32802

Dear Elder Carubba:

This is one of the most difficult letters I've ever had to write.

First of all I would like to say how much I have appreciated the support you have always given me. The Florida Conference has been very good to me and I will ever appreciate you for that.

Since November of 1983 I have been televising a program entitled "Prophecy Countdown." Since then the program has grown by leaps and bounds through direct miracles from God's hand.

Recently the Lord has opened a very large door for us to walk through. A nationwide satellite television network has offered us airtime. We believe with all our hearts that this is the Lord's will for Prophecy Countdown.

We will therefore be embarking on a nationwide self-supporting television ministry. With much pain I must therefore ask to be relieved of my local pastoral responsibilities. I, with this letter am requesting a leave of absence from the Florida Conference, to pursue this nationwide television ministry.

May God continue to bless each of us as we work for His soon coming.

Sincerely,

Pastor John Osborne

JWO/d

This letter was sent by EXPRESS MAIL and was supposed to have reached you by 10 a.m. yesterday, Tuesday, in time for the Conference Committee.

However, it was delivered to Florida Hospital and was sent over here just today--about 1:30 p.m.

October 4, 1984

Pastor John Osborne
1940 Curling Avenue
Naples, Florida 33942

Dear John:

I know it was difficult for you to write your letter of request for a leave of absence from the Florida Conference. However, there are always difficult decisions which have to be made.

I want to say how much we have appreciated your ministry and innovative leadership during the time you have been with us. Your television program in Naples has certainly been a fantastic success, and I know the Lord is going to continue to bless you. When one has to make such a decision and begin to go on his own, as you are doing, I know there is a feeling of insecurity. However, I admire you for your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no question in my mind but that He will see you through.

I regret it is impossible for the Florida Conference to sponsor such an adventure. However, I know you understand our position and why in administration, since we have to answer to so many individuals, we have to take the position we have.

At the time of our Executive Committee, it was voted unanimously to grant you the leave of absence which you requested. Elder Rogers is away at the present time; however, he will be writing you relative to the time of termination, etc.

May God continue to bless you and Diane in this great venture, John. If there is any way in which I can be of help, don't hesitate to approach me.

Sincerely your friend and fellow worker,

H. J. Carubba, President

m/c

October 11, 1984

Pastor John Osborne
1940 Curling Avenue
Naples, Florida 23942

Dear John:

Elder Carubba asked me to write you concerning your termination date with the Florida Conference.

It has been agreed by the officers to carry you through December 31, 1984. That will be the termination date as far as your responsibilities and pay are concerned with the Florida Conference. Your service record will also reflect those dates.

There are a couple items I need to chat with you about before that termination date. One is the outstanding evangelistic advances you have received from the conference: one for Bonita Springs of \$800, one for Ft. Myers of \$800, and another \$5,800 for the Naples church. We have received, according to my information, no reports on those, and we do need these as soon as we can get them.

Another item is outstanding on your moving account--in October after the \$50 is paid, there will be the \$1000 outstanding. We would hope this can be cleared up prior to your termination at the end of December.

I will be looking forward to hearing from you concerning these items. We are all praying that your new work will be a success.

There is one other item I need to bring to your attention--this is the fact that the teacher you have invited to join your staff is leaving without fulfilling his contract for the schoolyear 1984-84 [sic]. His moving bill into the conference is standing at \$2000. I don't know what determination is going to be made on this year, but I am assuming the administration will require him to pay this \$2000 prior to his receiving his last or terminating check. I believe Miss Hudak did inform you of this during the negotiation period.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Sincerely,

J. P. Rogers
Treasurer

APPENDIX XXI

**ANSWERS TO STATEMENTS SUBMITTED ON APRIL 2, 1987
BY THE LAYMEN'S COMMITTEE
ENTITLED "AREAS OF CONCERN"**

ANSWERS TO LAYMEN'S COMMITTEE "AREAS OF CONCERN"
April 3, 1987
Page 2

ANSWERS TO STATEMENTS SUBMITTED ON APRIL 2, 1987
BY THE LAYMEN'S COMMITTEE
ENTITLED "AREAS OF CONCERN"

1. John Osborne, while making presentations in churches and in his written materials consistently disclaims formal ties with the organized Seventh-day Adventist denomination work. He states that he is neither licensed nor paid by the Seventh-day Adventist church (see Volume 1, No. 2, page 2, PROPHECY COUNTDOWN NEWS; ~~copy attached hereto~~).

2. When Prophecy Countdown, Inc. was being organized, John Osborne was both a pastor of the Bonita Springs Seventh-day Adventist Church and the chief officer of the new organization. During this time the lines between the two may have been hard to distinguish by creditors and church members alike. However, there has never been any intention on the part of anyone representing Prophecy Countdown, Inc. to trade on the credit of the church. Every effort is made to maintain all business dealings on behalf of Prophecy Countdown, Inc. in the name of the corporation. All obligations of Prophecy Countdown, Inc. are billed in the name of Prophecy Countdown, Inc. and are paid by Prophecy Countdown, Inc. including our WATS telephone service.

3. To our knowledge the relationship of Prophecy Countdown, Inc. and the Bonita Springs Seventh-day Adventist Church is within church standards as represented in the Church Manual. The church maintains its own set of books and presumably reports and pays all conference funds including tithe to the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventist. No monies donated to the Bonita Springs Seventh-day Adventist church have been used by Prophecy Countdown, Inc.

4. Prophecy Countdown, Inc.'s Board of Directors, meeting on April 3, 1987, voted the following resolution.

The Video Production assets of Prophecy Countdown, Inc.

may only be used or contracted for use by Seventh-day

Adventist related tax exempt ministries and organizations.

To our knowledge these assets have never been used outside the denomination to date. The above resolution was adopted in order to:

- A. Prevent contracted services from becoming more than incidental to the primary purpose

A. (cont.) of Prophecy Countdown, Inc. and therefore threaten its tax exempt status.

Present
B. *Drawn* into question the tax exempt status of the Bonita Springs Seventh-day Adventist Church.

C. To prevent inadvertently supporting causes that would violate the standards of our church.

totally
5. A. We are *totally* without knowledge of funds having been donated to the Bonita Springs Seventh-day Adventist Church and thereafter *adverted* to Prophecy Countdown, Inc. or its programs.

B. On June 10, 1986 Prophecy Countdown, Inc. received as a donation the C.D. in question, current value \$39,500.00, pursuant to a consent to transfer the funds, signed by the donor, from Bonita Evangelistic Good Health Association of Seventh-day Adventist to Prophecy Countdown, Inc. Although these funds may have been held in trust at one time by the Bonita Springs Seventh-day Adventist Church, to our knowledge they were never donated to the church for its use.

6. The mission of Prophecy Countdown, Inc. is to preach the gospel to all the world primarily through a video ministry. This includes proclaiming the traditional messages that are uniquely identified with Seventh-day Adventism such as the Sabbath question, the State of the Dead, the Sanctuary Service, the Health message, the Nearness of the End of Time, the Second Advent, etc. Secondly, we believe we are called to proclaim the straight testimony of the true witness which will work reformation and commitment to spiritual growth within the Seventh-day Adventist church. Further, we believe that learning centers ought to be established which will instruct trainees in the basic principles of health reformation, natural healing, proper diet, and how to cope with living during this period

6. (cont.) close-to-the-end of time.

7. The Chapin issue is in the process of being resolved; hopefully to the satisfaction of both the Chapins and Prophecy Countdown, Inc.

APPENDIX XXII

CARL CHAPIN IRREVOCABLE TRUST

March 14, 1981 614
Personal Ministries

Period of 4
Baptist Church

Dear Church Members:

We have important decisions to make each day. As a member of your church board I have agonized and prayed for guidance of the Holy Spirit in fulfilling my obligation to our church YOUR CHURCH. And I know you folk wish to do the same.

Last December I stood alone on asking that we consider a matter as to obligations of added indebtedness of a quarter million dollars. This was not easy for me, but I felt strongly that we need to be well informed of any subject voted on in order to vote intelligently.

We had a church Board Meeting this past Tuesday and again I stood alone in a "NO" vote. You, my Brothers and Sisters, are going to be asked to vote on this question and I wish to inform you why I voted "NO", and then I shall feel relieved of any future reproach for not informing honestly. The matter again concerns church obligations---as I see it. It is to O.K. Prophecy Countdown leasing portable buildings to place on lots of church property by Prophecy Countdown. We should know the financial indebtedness of ~~any~~ organization involving us. I mentioned that as far as I could find out (and I am a member of the Board of Directors of Prophecy Countdown) We are already in debt to over a quarter million dollars and have plans (of which I object to) of going further into debt of at least another half million dollars.

I would wish to call attention to just a couple of statements from Spirit of Prophecy--Counsels on Stewardship--p. 254-255. It only takes 60- to 85 seconds to read and I was refused permission to read these statements in our Church Board Meeting.

Carl Chapin

Regarding purchasing of license for TV station of \$100,000 + broad cast equipment & transmitter costing at least another \$200,000 -

13214 5th St. S.E.
Ft. Myers, Fla. 33905
March 24, 1987

Dear John:

My wife and I are requesting a return of our loan to Prophecy Countdown as was originally understood by us and we are at a loss to even think that you understood anything otherwise.

When I was contacted by Pastor Veach he assured me that we would have a note covering the indebtedness with interest at 13% or more, as at that time you were paying 13% to 18% on other items owed. I mentioned that we were receiving 12% and would not feel right to have you pay any more than 12%. I also stressed paying off all indebtedness as soon as possible in order that the Lord's money should not be paid out in interest payments of any kind. Economize on all operations and strive to be out of debt within the following year to 18 months. Out of debt meaning to anyone including ourselves.

Whenever you or Pastor Veach ask for a loan then or afterward it was always that an emergency situation which should be met that day and the paper work of a note would be prepared by your attorney--signed, notarized, and delivered to me within the week. This was never done.

I had complete trust in Pastor Veach and took his word as I believe I had an obligation to him as a minister of our SDA Church, following all Biblical instruction for truthfulness, honesty and high standards of promptness in these matters as well as the special instruction given us through the special messages from God's servant regarding the handling of the Lord's money.

John, you and Pastor Veach have a solemn and heavy obligation to your Calling, your God, your Church and to each and every member and the organization that no reflection or taint of fraudulent dealings should reflect adversely upon His Church, His Cause or His Organized Work including bringing any taint of questionable handling of your church connected affairs.

I personally have stressed Spirit of Prophecy admonition and asked Pastor Veach many times the past few months about getting us paid up. In December he asked if \$3500 would be a good start. I assured him it would, but needed to continue monthly until paid. Pastor Veach assured me that he would bring this to your attention. I assumed he did.

Now in closing I again ask you to fulfill your part as promised. You stated to the church last Sabbath that Prophecy Countdown is now in excellent financial condition--money flowing in at the rate of \$3,000 to \$4,000 or more a day--bills paid and a cash balance of \$35,000. We are requesting a prompt and complete return of monies loaned by my wife and myself.

Respectfully your Brother and Sister
in Christ,

John

Prophecy Countdown, Inc.

Phone 1-800-HIS LOVE • (813) 947-1844
27021 Williams Drive
Bonita Springs, Florida 33923

March 26, 1987

Carl Chapin
13214 5th Street SE
Ft Myers FL 33905

Dear Carl:

Recently we have learned that you have become very distressed about the finances that you have placed in trust with Prophecy Countdown for the furtherance of this ministry. This makes us very sad indeed. We have felt that we were working harmoniously in the finishing of the work, and planned to continue working together with others as members of the body of Christ in this ministry. If it is true that you now regret your participation and support of this ministry, your wishes demand our immediate attention. Although we appreciate your generosity in the past, and operated on the belief that the money placed in our hands was a sacred trust, and have faithfully paid payments as interest to you each and every month as agreed, we will need to plan to make substantial payments to you, in addition to the interest payments, against the principal you have entrusted to this work. According to our records you have placed in Prophecy Countdown funds as follow:

Loan Date	Loan Amount
05/18/85	\$20,000.00
06/14/85	6,000.00
10/12/85	10,000.00
06/09/86	8,000.00
07/21/86	4,000.00
	\$48,000.00
	\$53,000

If you would like to request a repayment schedule for our consideration, please write us a note, perhaps at the bottom of this letter stating your desires in this regard and initial it and please have your wife initial it too so that everyone can be involved in the decision making process.

Of course, you may wish to consider whether or not you wish to be reconsidered for service on our Board of Directors. We will be meeting soon to elect directors and officers for the next year and will need to consider your desires in this area also.

I want you to know, Brother Chapin, that we love you and your wife and appreciate what you have done for Prophecy Countdown's ministry more than

Carl Chapin
March 26, 1987
Page 2

you will ever know and look forward to spending eternity with you and many of those for whom we have worked together in this cause.

Your brother in Christ,

Pastor John Osborne
President/Speaker

ems

Enclosure

John Osborne - Prophecy Countdown
27021 Williams Drive
Bonita Springs, Florida 33923
Dear John:

March 30, 1987

In answer to your letter of 3/26/87 I would wish to call your attention to a bit of background. First, however, I would like to state that I have no antagonism toward you--my antagonism is toward allowing ourselves to go into debt--paying high interest rates on unwarranted borrowings. The Lord has given us a plentiful amount of instruction through His servant Sr. White in volumes of Spirit of Prophecy in many, many ways.

At our last church board meeting which was called primarily for the purpose of gaining church permission to further obligate Prophecy Countdown into deeper debt, I ask about the financial condition of Prophecy Countdown, stating a few facts as I understood them and asked if these figures were essentially correct. These figures were not refuted by either you or Dianne or Pastor Veatch, so I could reasonably assume them to be correct. I respectfully ask for permission to read a statement from Counsels on Stewardship (which would take about 75 seconds) and you promptly let us know that you were the chairman of the meeting and you would not allow any such thing (that stewardship does not enter into our discussion in any way) and you promptly closed the meeting. I was very coolly brushed off by my pastors and left in the shock of realizing that spirit of prophecy guidance could not be read at an SDA Church Board Meeting--not even for 70-80 seconds, by pastors who I thought had been stressing Spirit of Prophecy in all sermons and meetings especially when it would come to downgrading our organized conference work in several areas.

It had been voted, as you know, to involve the church in voting on this--the following Sabbath. After much agonizing and prayer I was strongly impressed as an Elder of the church and a member of the Board of Directors that our church members should have the privilege of voting intelligently from a few facts.

I have my notes as to what I stated. My statements came back to me from you terribly warped. This is to be expected when anyone looks at statements with a pre-conceived spirit of self justification and antagonism.

Perhaps I should remark here just a bit about your letter to the whole church dated 3/16/87:

In item 7 your statement on railing accusations against P.C. You know is untruthful and inaccurate--remember I made no accusations at all. I stated that as far as I could find out certain amounts range roughly between two figures were owed and I ask you and Dianne if these were too far off. I received no refutation. That was the time to set my mind at ease rather than sending a letter to the whole church blasting my integrity and truthfulness.

I stand open for an apology from you and inasmuch as you took the initiative to try to blacken my character and stir up strong animosity against me by every member of the church, I shall expect the apology to cover another letter to every member of our church correcting all deceptive and misleading statements in your letter of 3/16/87, to the church family.

John, it is not easy for me to write this letter. I am twice your age and have been in the way, on the road to the kingdom for over 70 years being brought up a SDA. I, too, have made many mistakes. I have found that the only way is to confess our sin; never try to justify ones self or become antagonistic. Be always aware that "Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall". Pr. 16:18. John, we need so much to realize our own unworthiness, our complete inadequacy, our nothingness and our great need of humility, being emptied of self every moment in order that Jesus can abide in our heart at all times. It is only by His indwelling power and the complete guidance of the Holy Spirit that anything can be accomplished by any mortal, sinful man.

In this regard --I would wish to call attention to one of my favorite thoughts for meditation given by Jesus through His servant in The Desire of Ages, page 324. "We must inevitably be under the control of the one or the other of two great powers that are contending for the supremacy of the world. It is not necessary for us deliberately to choose the service of the kingdom of darkness in order to come under its dominion. We have only to neglect to ally ourselves with the kingdom of light."

John, some of our leaders in our Conferences and even in the GC have made sad mistakes, and are perhaps worthy of strong rebuke, but let us not be guilty of judging and condemning also. We all have but one Just and Righteous Judge. Should we not leave some matters up to the Holy Spirit to do His work? Why should we be found guilty of judging--"Judge not lest ye be judged"--

You have made some mistatements and strongly false statements--you perhaps have not realized when these were untruthful at the time, but these do erode your creditability very seriously. We, as children of God's remnant are the special target of Satan and his hosts. He loves it when we allow him to draw us into the track of self-deceptive--setting self up to be somewhat when God can use only those who are of a humble and contrite spirit. We can take NO-NO credit to self. If at any time the Lord can use--a weak mortal man--Satan takes pride in deceiving us to believe that we of ourselves are accomplishing anything at all for Him.

I speak to myself when I speak to you and I pray that you will prayerfully reconsider and ask the Holy Spirit to convict of sin and determine to in humility and the guidance of His Spirit make all things right.

Now, in regard to your letter of 3/26/87 of which you ask for a prompt reply as to repayment of loans that my wife and I made to P. C. In reviewing our records we find that the total amount loaned in \$53,000.00. There was a check--No 1114 of 2/86 of \$5,000.00 which apparently was missed in your bookkeeping.

We would like this to be paid within the next ten days. As when I stated before that when you and Pastor Veatch ask for loans it was always an emergency we ded that day and I would receive a

signed and notarized note promptly--which we never did receive, and the loan was to be paid back as soon as means came in--so that Prophecy Countdown could be free from paying interest.

You stated that now Prophecy Countdown was financially in good shape with \$35,000.00 liquid and yesterday I was informed that means were continuing to come in at \$4,000.00 a day so we will look forward to receiving a cashiers check within this time limit.

Respectfully yours,

Prophecy Countdown, Inc.

Phone 1-800-HIS LOVE • (813) 947-1844

27021-Williams Drive
Bonita Springs, Florida
33923

April 1, 1987

Carl Chapin
13214 5th Street SE
Ft Myers FL 33905

Dear Brother Chapin:

In reply to your letter regarding your position towards Prophecy Countdown you apparently are wanting to continue your defense in what you have done. This is certainly your right, but I do not wish to continue this type of action over the love of money. I am truly sorry that we accepted your money on whatever pretext you wished to give it...at the time it seemed out of love for God and His truth, but now it seems it has turned out to be "I'll give my money to God on my terms and if you don't do things my way, I'll demand it back". That's fine Carl, and we have agreed to return it to you.

I'm sorry for the misunderstandings on your terms of the money given. You seemed quite happy with prompt interest payments until things did not go your's or Betty's way.

The Church Board meeting was not called primarily to gain permission to further obligate Prophecy Countdown. It was to conduct necessary business of the Bonita Springs Seventh-day Adventist Church. Certainly not to discuss Prophecy Countdown business, which is totally inappropriate. You were told to bring it up at Prophecy Countdown board meeting which is the appropriate place. The Bonita Springs Seventh-day Adventist Church Board were in agreement on this.

As far as self-justification and antagonism, Carl and Betty, I think you need to have been here over the past months and heard the reports of Betty's phone calls to supporters of Prophecy Countdown to tell and spread gossip. And also the many phone calls that you, Carl, have made across this nation to tell others of your loans to Prophecy Countdown full well knowing they would tear down Prophecy Countdown. On many occasions, Carl, I have asked your forgiveness for wrongs, I have also asked public forgiveness for wrongs in the church. I have no problem asking forgiveness when I'm wrong. I make many mistakes and I know my

Carl Chapin
April 1, 1987
Page 2

weaknesses, but I didn't start a phone campaign or besmirch you on the platform of the holy sanctuary on Sabbath. And Carl, after you stood before the church to tell what you call "a few facts", I had many church members come to me requesting that we bring church discipline on you for misuse of your office as Elder. They were terribly hurt for the visitors and the baptismal candidates that were there. Three of these people had to be visited and brought back. Further, these members felt the basis for your speech was mercenary and saw no love for the interest of the Prophecy Countdown ministry.

After much prayer I felt that "church discipline" would only be a cause for greater harm and I would not cause you or Betty any further hurts because in spite of what you may believe I do love you both; so it was recommended that we just tell "the facts", and answer your statements to clear the ministry, not John Osborne.

The members came to me and said how much they appreciated the open letter to the church and saw no antagonism or self-justification in it.

It has been very obvious to many, for some time, that you do not care for me personally, and I can accept that. I'm only a human that God has put a burden on to save souls. I'm nothing, and it's not me that has done any great thing to make this ministry. God has just put a burden on me and somehow He has seen something in me to be able to use. I give God all the credit no matter what you choose to believe.

It would be well to weigh out the scope of this ministry and how the Lord has blessed, and ask if your efforts would be better directed for, instead of against.

In closing, regarding your demand for a cashiers check for \$53,000 in ten (10) days, I'm sorry to say that this is not my decision, but the Boards which meets Friday, April 3, at 10 A.M. You can see from the financial disclosure in the report to the church members that Prophecy Countdown has other obligations that must be met besides the Chapin's demand. There is also the operating expenses which come out of the daily cashflow. Further, there is a sacred responsibility on our liquid assets, in that they include tithe funds which I refuse to use for the payment of indebtedness. The Prophecy Countdown Board will decide the form and type of payment to return your monies.

Nothing has been missed in our bookkeeping as we have record of

Carl Chapin
April 1, 1987
Page 3

check #1114 of February 13, 1986 for \$5,000 being given as a donation. I'm enclosing a complete list of all your donations so the record can be clean.

Sincerely,



Pastor John Osborne
President/Spokesman

ems

Enclosure

"The word of the Lord came to Elijah; he did not seek to be the Lord's messenger, but the word came to him. God always has men to whom He entrusts His message. His Spirit moves upon their hearts and constrains them to speak. Stimulated by holy zeal, and with the divine impulse strong upon them, they enter upon the performance of their duty without coldly calculating the consequences of speaking to the people the word which the Lord has given them. But the servant of God is soon made aware that he has risked something. He finds himself and his message made the subject of criticism. His manners, his life, his property, are all inspected and commented upon. His message is picked to pieces and rejected in the most illiberal and unsanctified spirit, as men in their finite judgment see fit. Has that message done the work that God designed it should accomplish? No; it has signally failed because the hearts of the hearers were unsanctified."

ST 299

APPENDIX XXIII

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN—AUGUST 18, 1985

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERNAUG. 18, 1985

THIS IS TO CERTIFY MY TOTAL APPROVAL OF THE
USE OF THE (C. D. # 260268868, - \$47,500.00)
FOR PROMOTION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF "GOOD HEALTH"
FACILITIES ON THE DONATED LAND IN BONITA SPRINGS,
FLA., BEING PART OF "LOT 13 - BONITA FARMS", AND
BORDERED ON THE NORTH BY WEST TERRY ST., ON THE
WEST BY WILLIAMS RD., ON THE EAST BY PINE AVE.,
SOUTH BY THE IMPERIAL RIVER.

AND I ALSO AM PLEASED TO APPROVE THAT THE NEWLY
ORGANIZED CORPORATION, KNOWN AS "BONITA EVANGELISTIC
AND GOOD HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS"
SHALL HAVE COMPLETE AND TOTAL AUTHORITY TO DISPERSE
THESE FUNDS FOR THE PROMOTION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF
HEALTH FACILITIES, AS STATED ABOVE.

WITNESS:

Verdine Johnson
Harold R. Webb

SIGNED:

Blanche Beal

NOTARY PUBLIC:

Cynthia A. Stein

NOTARY PUBLIC STATE OF FLORIDA
MY COMMISSION EXP. JUNE 17, 1989
BONDED THRU GENERAL INS. UND.

APPENDIX XXIV

BEAL FUND

BEAL FUND

September 11, 1983 -

After presenting Treasurer's Report discussed:

Beal Fund - Elder Veach stated this was a trust fund
83-78 set up by Mr. & Mrs. Beal for a future project.

October 11, 1983 -

Beal Fund - There was further discussion regarding the
83-99 Beal Fund and its purpose. Elder Veach stated
plans are for a clinic and retirement center
with cottages, duplexes, etc. Property has
been reserved by Elder and Mrs. Veach for
this purpose. Elder Veach stated there is
work to be done with the Conference, such
as the forming of a corporation. Pastor
Osborne stated he will support and work
with Elder Veach on this project.

November 8, 1983 -

Beal Fund - There was further discussion regarding the
83-106 Beal Fund and its intended use. Mel Thim
suggested the purpose of the money should
be specified in writing by Mrs. Beal. The
Board agreed unanimously.

Report due on the first Friday following the last Sabbath of the month.

CHURCH I.D. # _____ Church Treasurer's Record

Summary of _____ Baptist Church of Springfield

For the Month of October 1983

SABBATH SCHOOL		NAME OF FUNDS				TOTALS
Check No.	Date	Amount	For Office Use Only	Amount		
Regular Sabbath School* 201	8-2-11					1762.47
13th Sabbath 202	7-38					
Investment 203	40.13					
Birthday & Thank 204	16.55					
Total Sabbath School Offerings					146.77	146.77
Total Mission Funds					120.00	120.00
MISCELLANEOUS FUNDS						
Florida Conference Advance*	708	18.63				
Conference Evangelism*	706					
Faith for Today	405					
Voice of Prophecy	408	31.05				
Transference		20.01				
Total Miscellaneous					69.69	69.69
TOTAL REMITTANCE					209.85	209.85
Balance First of Month						
Balance During the Month						
Balance at Close of Month						
LOCAL CHURCH FUNDS						
Church Budget*						
Church Expense						
Church School*						
Personal Ministries*						
Sabbath School Expense*						
Community Services*						
Building Fund*						
Youth Activities*						
Poor Fund						
Flowers Fund						
T.V. Ministry						
Health Fund						
SE Day Plan						
Relief						
Trailblazer Memorial						
Beal Fund						
Review						
Bible						
Grading Beal						
TOTAL CHURCH FUNDS						
TALST (Same as Total Church Funds)						
CHECKING (Total Received)						
SAVINGS (Savings Act.)						
TREASURER						
ADDRESS						
PHONE						

White & Yellow - Send to Conference with Remittance (Yellow copy will be returned to Treasurer as receipt)

Pink - Give to your Pastor *

* Totals must equal

* Offerings on title envelope

TOTAL CHURCH FUNDS: 56796.69

PHONE: 8131-597-4769

Report due on the first Friday following
the last Sabbath of the month.

Summary of

Benita Springs

CHURCH I.D. #

Church Treasurer's Record

For the Month of		NAME OF FUNDS		TOTALS	
December 1985		Tithe		1238 24	
		MISSION FUNDS			
		Ingathering* - SDA Donated	401	383 00	
		Ingathering* - Non-SDA Donated	402	43 00	
		Week of Sacrifice	301		
		Mission Extension	303		
		Mission - Misc.	304		
		Birthday & Thank	204		
Total Sabbath School Offerings				190 42	
		Total Mission Funds		1003 81	
		MISCELLANEOUS FUNDS			
		Florida Conference Advance*	708	24 63	
		Conference Evangelism*	706		
		Faith for Today	405		
		Voice of Prophecy	408		
		ADA		200 00	
		Total Miscellaneous		244 63	
		TOTAL REMITTANCE		2288 68	
		Balance at Close of Month			
		LOCAL CHURCH FUNDS			
		Retained by church treasurer			
Check No.	Date	Amount			
		Church Budget*			
		Church Expense			
		Church School*			
		Personal Ministries*			
		Sabbath School Expense*			
		Community Services*			
		Building Fund*			
		Youth Activities*			
		Poor Fund			
		Flower Fund			
		T.M. Ministries			
		Health Fund			
		5-Day Plan			
		Liberty			
		Mel Thorne Memorial			
		Social Fund			
		Reimbursement			
		Bible			
		Reading Bible			
		TOTALST (Same as Total Church Funds)		3143 25	
		CHECKING (Total Received)		800 1809 66	
		SAVINGS (Savings Acct.)		1897 16	
		Treasurer		Florence M. Milne	
		Address		815 Yucca Ct.	
		Address		Naples, FL 33963	
		Phone		813/597-4769	
		TOTAL CHURCH FUNDS*		3143 25	

*Offerings on tithe envelope
†Totals must equal
Pink - Give to your Pastor

APPENDIX XXV

**BONITA SPRINGS SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
BOARD MINUTES**

BONITA SPRINGS SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
Board Meeting
October 14, 1985 7:30 p.m.

Board Members Present: Pastor Rick LaVenture, Carl Chapin, Pastor John Osborne, Dianne Osborne, Don Schlarb, Elva Thim, Janet Zucal

Devotional Reading: Pastor LaVenture

Prayer: By each member

CLERK'S REPORT: VOTED to accept the minutes of the September 10, 1985 Board Meeting. Motion: Carl Chapin, Second: Elva Thim. Voted—Unanimous.

TREASURER'S REPORT: VOTED to accept the September 1985 Treasurer's Report. Motion: Dianne Osborne. Second: Don Schlarb. Voted—Unanimous.

MEMBERSHIP TRANSFERS: VOTED to recommend transfer from Bonita SDA Church to Naples SDA Church: Cheryl and Larry Lee; Andy and JoAnn Hilton and Adelia Harrigan. Motion: John Osborne. Second: Don Schlarb. Voted—Unanimous.

DISFELLOWSHIP REQUESTS: VOTED to recommend disfellowship, by their request, Ed and Ruth Duvall, Laura and James Ronzo and Ethel Salisbury. All are now members of the Worldwide Church of God. Motion: Janet Zucal. Second: Don Schlarb. Voted—Unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:40 p.m.

PRAYER: Pastor LaVenture

Pastor Rick LaVenture, Chairman
Janet Zucal, Clerk

CHURCH SERVICES, October 19, 1985: VOTED to support the Shepherd Program of Bonita Springs by raising the annual \$190 due from our church. Motion: Carl Chapin. Second: Pastor John Osborne. Voted—Unanimous

BONITA SPRINGS SDA CHURCH OFFICERS' MEETING

November 26, 1985

7:30 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Pastor LaVenture, Carl Chapin, Don Miller, Elva Thim, Don Schlarb, Pastor Veach, Janet Zucal

DEVOTIONAL READING: Pastor LaVenture

PRAYER: By all present

CLERK'S REPORT: Voted to accept the minutes of the October 14, 1985 meeting. MOTION: Elva Thim. SECOND: Carl Chapin. VOTED - Unanimous.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Voted to accept the October 1985 Treasurer's Report. MOTION: Don Miller. SECOND: Pastor H. R. Veach. VOTED - Unanimous.

CHURCH SCHOOL BILL - Voted to rescind the motion made at the May 14, 1985 Board Meeting (#85-239). Instead of paying the full amount of Evan Lee's school bill, Pastor Veach made the motion that the Bonita Springs Church pay \$100. SECOND: Don Miller. VOTED - unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:40 p.m.

PRAYER: Carl Chapin

Pastor Rick LaVenture, Chairman

Janet O. Zucal, Clerk

• Books accepted in church.
• Pymke to membership.
• Jan Murrie for 1985.

APPENDIX XXVI

LETTER FROM JOHN GILBERT

FLORIDA CONFERENCE

of Seventh-day Adventists



John Osborne
27021 Williams Dr.
Bonita Springs, Fl 33923

January 27, 1986

Dear John,

Elder Graham has given me your letter of December 30, 1985 requesting an audit of Prophecy Countdown. I will plan to be available February 10th. Unless I hear to the contrary I will be at the church about 9:30 that Monday morning. Surely we can find a place somewhere in the church for me to work.

John, it is important that all of the financial records of Prophecy Countdown be assembled and accessible. It would be well for us to review what records will be needed. If some of these records are not available we should make an effort to find them or have them photocopied by the bank as such would be the case of a missing bank statement or cancelled checks. Here is a list of the records needed.

1. Organizing.. Dates, charter/bylaws, tax status, etc.
2. Bank statements and cancelled checks. Include all accounts open or closed as well as any savings accounts.
3. Minutes of board/committee meetings.
4. Periodic financial statements.
5. Disbursements journal or check register.
6. Paid bills and invoice files.
7. Cash receipts journal.
8. Deposit records.
9. Mailing lists.
10. Other pertinent records.

Sincerely,

John Gilbert, Auditor
Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

P.O. Box 1313
616 E. Rollins Street
Orlando, Fla. 32802

Phone (305) 898-7521

copies to: Elder Gordon
Elder Graham
Elder Walden

APPENDIX XXVII

AUDITOR'S STATEMENT

FLORIDA CONFERENCE

of Seventh-day Adventists



P.O. Box 1313
616 E. Rollins Street
Orlando, Fla. 32802
Phone (305) 898-7521

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE PROPHECY COUNTDOWN BOARD

I have reviewed the Prophecy Countdown financial records made available to me from its inception through December 31, 1985. Cash is on deposit as outlined below.

First National Bank of Bonita Springs

P. O. Drawer 2648

Bonita Springs, Fl 33923

account number 031-208	as of December 31, 1985	\$5673.64
add deposit in transit		397.00

\$6070.64

Less outstanding checks

2640.56

Bank Balance December 31, 1985

\$3430.08

Formal financial reports are not published.

Tithe from donors is receipted and not accounted for separately.

Sequential blocks of receipts could not be traced to bank deposits the majority of the time. Apparently deposits were made and then receipts were posted later not necessarily in the order they were received.

Internal control, to control or limit spending/purchases was inadequate. It appears that the board has very little influence in limiting or controlling expenditures.

Listed above are some of the inadequacies that make it impossible for me to express an opinion regarding the financial operations of Prophecy Countdown for the period ending December 31, 1985.

John Gilbert, Auditor
Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Orlando, Florida

February 14, 1986

APPENDIX XXVIII

MEMORANDUM FROM JACK WRIGHT

Released 9-13-91 O.S.

CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM

September 6, 1991

TO: Elder Ron Spear, Hope International
Box 940
Eatonville, WA 98328

FROM: Jack Wright

RE: Rolling Hills Church / Prophecy Countdown

In connection with your request, the following information is being made available in order that you might follow through with any plans that you may have.

History: Following my undergraduate work I have served in numerous positions of leadership in the remnant church as well as in the private sector of business.

P/C Employment 1989 - 1991: I joined the Rolling Hills Church, Mt. Dora, Florida because I believed that John Osborne preached and taught the Three Angles Messages and the Spirit of Prophecy.

Board of Directors: I supported John Osborne's ministry whole heartedly and was elected to the Board, becoming its chairman January 1990. Membership grew from 50 to 300 attending each Sabbath. The television ministry generated in excess of one million dollars annually.

Decline: During the past several months I have witnessed numerous disturbing situations that caused me to re-evaluate the entire ministry and operation of John Osborne:

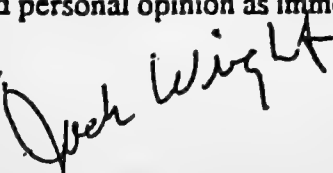
- Business "Principles". Non-payment of debts to major T.V. networks, the same to personal and professional creditors. Involvement with credit and collection agencies. Radical purchases of real estate and expensive automobiles. Failure to provide accurate financial statements subsequent to numerous requests from several board members.
- Negative Leadership. Resignations from assistant pastors, Sabbath school superintendent, operations manager and bible workers as a result of John Osborne's failure to provide required support materials as promised... personally deciding instead to pay royalties and bonuses to himself and his office manager. Results: 400+ bible students lost their bible instructor. Discovery that John Osborne had declared Bankruptcy...taking company assets for his own personal use early in his career.
- Negative Relationships. Numerous complaints have been received from former staff members as well as church members regarding John Osborne's explicit peculiar sexual activities and questionable relationships with members of the opposite sex. Documented physical altercations in a public restaurant with employee resulting in a out of court settlement to damaged defendant in amounts exceeding \$7,300.00 dollars. Use of profane language in the presence of his office staff and assistant pastor's wife. In court judgement with yet another assistant pastor in the amount of \$39,000+ dollars - settlement made by John Osborne using mostly tithe funds. Denounced leadership of the general and local conferences as well as other independent ministries including Elder Ralph Larson stating that Pastor Larson was "too old and repeated the same old sermons," that "he only used him for credibility... along with other independent ministries."

It is my opinion that the above points have caused John Osborne to lose whatever positive influence he had. As a result of John Osborne's "questionable activities" his wife has been allowed to dictate the direction of the church and ministry.

You are aware that I possess documentation that substantiates the referenced comments. The same can be made available upon requests. In my opinion John Osborne is not a man of God. The aforementioned points reflect my overview and personal opinion as immediate past chairmen of Prophecy Countdown.

Respectfully,

Jack Wright



APPENDIX XXIX

LETTER TO SUPPORTERS OF PROPHECY COUNTDOWN

Phone
1-800-HIS LOVE • (904) 735-1844
Mailing Address
P.O. Box 1844 • Grand Island, FL 32735
Street Address
1250 New Hwy. 441 S. • Mt. Dora, FL 32757

Prophecy Countdown, Inc.

December 1991

Dear Supporter of Prophecy Countdown:

By now you have no doubt seen the "Confidential Memorandum" from the former Board Chairman of Prophecy Countdown, Jack Wright. Copies of it have been sent by the Florida Conference to the other conferences around the world. The local conferences then sent it to the pastors, and they in turn have photocopied it, read it from the pulpit on Sabbath, and passed it out to their church members. Jack Wright's name is on it, BUT IT'S OBVIOUS THAT THE CONFERENCE IS THE ONE ORCHESTRATING ITS DISTRIBUTION. As with most everything else that is propagated from our pulpits, they never investigate as to whether it is truth or heresy, it's whatever is expedient to their cause.

Surely none of our supporters can say that they have been SURPRISED by all this. We all knew, especially after Pastor Osborne's NLP videos, that the conference was going to do something -- and that it would be mammoth. PASTOR OSBORNE HAS BEEN WARNING US ABOUT THIS, THEY'VE BEEN RATTLING THEIR SABERS FOR MONTHS, AND NOW SATAN HAS CONVENIENTLY PROVIDED THEM WITH A "JUDAS" TO DO THEIR DIRTY WORK!

But the question some are now asking is: "Why did Jack Wright BETRAY Prophecy Countdown, and align himself with the Conference?" Well, that's a sad story. A story of a man with a history of making false statements.

As time went by, during Mr. Wright's tenure as Board Chairman, his conflicting false statements began to surface more and more. The Prophecy Countdown Board realized that it was only a matter of time until he would have to be confronted, and based on prior information, the Board knew that it would not be a pleasant situation. Blatant evidence of his falsehoods came to light, and it was necessary that he be confronted by those who had witnessed his behavior. At that point he denied his glaring falsehoods, called all his witnesses liars, and resigned in anger. Be assured, his resignation did not take place "after much prayer", as he stated in his "Confidential Memorandum".

Mr. Wright was further brought under DISCIPLINE by the Rolling Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church for divorcing his wife with NO Biblical grounds. (For some reason he failed to mention all this in his "Confidential Memorandum.") This is the sad situation that has led to the smear campaign we find transpiring today.

This story closely parallels another sad story in sacred history, where a man would not accept reproof. In Great Controversy page 44, we read: "He (Judas) yielded his mind to the control of the powers of darkness, he became angry when his faults were reproofed, and thus he was led to

A television ministry supported by Seventh-day Adventist laymen -- worldwide

Supporter of Prophecy Countdown
December 1991
Page 2

commit the fearful crime of betraying his Master. So do all who cherish evil under a profession of godliness hate those who disturb their peace by condemning their course of sin. WHEN A FAVORABLE OPPORTUNITY IS PRESENTED, THEY WILL, LIKE JUDAS, BETRAY THOSE WHO FOR THEIR GOOD HAVE SOUGHT TO REPROVE THEM."

It is beyond us to comprehend how Mr. Wright, whom we loved and fellowshiped with, who was once so supportive of this ministry and Pastor Osborne, and openly acknowledged that this was the man and ministry chosen of God to bear a special message to God's church and the world, could turn on us so quickly, and become our worst enemy. But the most amazing thing is to hear him say that he "loves" us, and is doing this to "teach us a lesson"! In the book *Desire of Ages*, and chapter entitled: Judas, we read, "In betraying Him, it was his (Judas') purpose to teach Him (Jesus) a lesson."

We realize your conference and pastor is most likely trying to overwhelm you with this smear campaign against Prophecy Countdown, and frankly we are tired of the shabby treatment our supporters are receiving from these conference employees. We believe we have found a way to provide you with the much needed reinforcement which will allow you to respond accordingly.

What is the reinforcement we are going to provide you with? Well, what does Prophecy Countdown do best? What have we the most experience in? What has been our best method of communication in the past? Of course -- video! So we decided to respond in the format that we have become most accustomed to.

We, the Board of Prophecy Countdown, have made a video of our OWN, entitled: "Twisted Tales Untangled". In this two-tape video we spend nearly four hours responding point-by-point to the many accusations Mr. Wright and others have leveled against us. This is an extensive response to set the record straight, and vindicate what God is doing through Prophecy Countdown. Along with the video, there will also be a *documentation packet* with facts, figures and usable documentation to refute the wild accusations now being made against us.

The Board of Directors feel that we can no longer remain silent on these issues, and wanted to provide our faithful supporters with the resources to withstand the conference propaganda blitz. The video we have produced has taken considerable time, and resources, but we felt we needed to firmly establish our spiritual, moral, and financial accountability to you, our constituency -- and then get on with the work God has given us to do.

In the video "Twisted Tales Untangled", we have endeavored to answer each of the allegations that the Conference, through Mr. Wright and others, have leveled against us -- and we tried to leave no stone unturned. But be assured, even after our video refutes their present claims, we are certain they will not stop making false accusations against us, and claiming they have "proof". But regardless of how incriminating and convincing our enemies "proof" first appears, their "proof" crumbles when the true facts are revealed. We have no plans to spend any more of our precious time, or the Lord's money, to continue refuting their ongoing ridiculous allegations.

Even as we write, Jack Wright is continuing his false reports and unbelievable allegations. His

Supporter of Prophecy Countdown
December 1991
age 3

stories have taken on a life of their own. It seems the more he repeats them, the more bizarre they become, and the context continues to change. As we document his statements, he does not even realize how he is painting himself into a corner, as his statements begin to contradict themselves.

If your pastor has passed out Jack Wright's "Confidential Memorandum", insist that he also allow fairness and equal time to you, in our defense. In 2SM 153 we are instructed: *"If the wrongdoer only were concerned, and the work reached no farther than him, he alone should have the words of warning: but when his course of action is doing positive harm for the cause of truth, and souls are imperiled, GOD REQUIRES THAT THE WARNING BE AS BROAD AS THE INJURY DONE."*

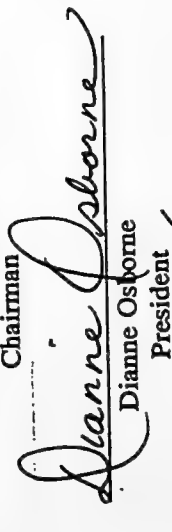
THE BIG QUESTION NOW IS -- HOW WILL THE SUPPORTERS OF PROPHECY COUNTDOWN RESPOND TO THIS SMEAR CAMPAIGN? Will they stand unflinchingly, or will they be blown away? Be assured friend, this is just "the beginning of sorrows." Our prayer is that we can all stand together in truth, even when "the majority forsake us."

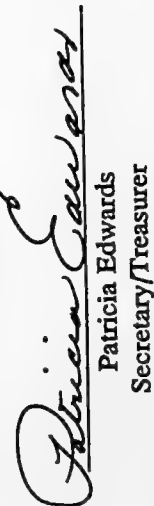
Please use the enclosed card to order your video and printed documentation of "Twisted Tales Untangled." All proceeds from this video will be given to the Rolling Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church *building program*. We felt this was a way to turn an attack of Satan into a blessing for the Lord. If we can help you in any way, please feel free to call or write.

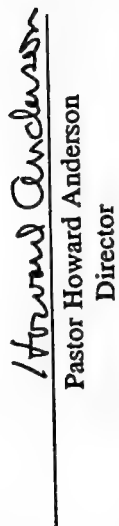
Your brothers and sisters in soul-winning,

The Prophecy Countdown Board of Directors

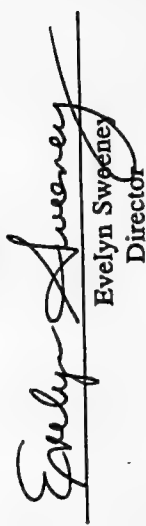

Kathleen M. Greenfield
Chairman


Dianne Osborne
President


Patricia Edwards
Secretary/Treasurer


Pastor Howard Anderson
Director


Hector Perez
Director


Evelyn Sweeney
Director

P.S. As Pastor John has said, "when one steps back and looks at the bigger picture, it's obvious to see why Satan is trying to stop Prophecy Countdown at any cost!" Just look at our enclosed evangelism schedule for 1992.

APPENDIX XXX

ESTABLISHMENT OF ROLLING HILLS COMPANY



Florida Conference



of Seventh-day Adventists

August 31, 1992

Elder Robert Dale, Vice President
North American Division
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

Dear Elder Dale:

As per your request to Elder Glenn Cavanaugh to have documentation concerning the organization of Rolling Hills Company, I am listing the action taken by the Florida Conference Executive Committee on July 26, 1987 as follows:

87-61
ORGANIZATION OF
ROLLING HILLS CO

VOTED to AUTHORIZE the organization of the Rolling Hills Company and the transfer of memberships from this company to the Conference Church. Membership lists to be provided to the Committee after said organization.

If you have any questions or I can be of further help, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Lewis Hendershot
Vice President/Secretary

dlw

cc: Elder Glenn Cavanaugh

APPENDIX XXXI

BISHOP LOAN

[illegible]

\$16,000.00

The undersigned, promise to pay to the order of BILLY BISHOP and MARGARET BISHOP, husband and wife, at 39519 Golden Gem, Umatilla, Florida 32784, the sum of SIXTEEN THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS in lawful money of the United States of America. This note shall be payable as follows:

The entire principal amount shall be due in ninety (90) days from the date of the note. Prepayment of any amount may be made at any time without penalty.

BY

John W. Osborne, Jr. as President of Prophecy Countdown, Inc.

BY

~~DiAnne I Osborne as Secretary/Treasurer of Prophecy Countdown, Inc.~~

Notary:

Patricia Edwards

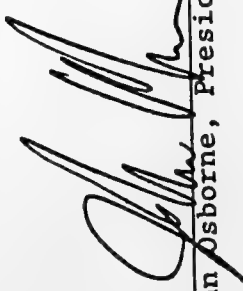
**NOTARY PUBLIC, STATE OF FLORIDA.
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES: OCT. 5, 1991.
BONDED THRU NOTARY PUBLIC UNDERWRITERS.**

Phone
1-800-HIS LOVE • (904) 669-3293
Mailing Address
P.O. Box 1844 • Grand Island, FL 32735
Street Address
17120 S.E. Hwy. 450 • Umatilla, FL 32784
(7 Mi. N.W. of Umatilla on 450)

Prophecy Countdown, Inc.

April 5, 1989

We, the officers of PROPHECY COUNTDOWN, INC., do hereby pledge to repay Billy and Margaret Bishop \$30,000 plus interest figured at 10% per year, within 30 days of the signing of this agreement.


John Osborne, President


Dianne Osborne, Treasurer

Notary: 
Date: April 6, 1989

NOTARY PUBLIC, STATE OF FLORIDA.
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES: OCT. 5, 1991.
BONDED THRU NOTARY PUBLIC UNDERWRITERS.

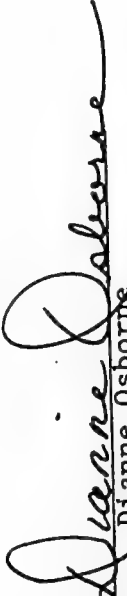
A television ministry supported by Seventh-day Adventist laymen — worldwide.

Phone
1-800-HIS LOVE • (904) 669-3293
Mailing Address
P.O. Box 1844 • Grand Island, FL 32735
Street Address
17120 S.E. Hwy. 450 • Umatilla, FL 32784
(7 Mi. N.W. of Umatilla on 450)

Prophecy Countdown, Inc.

March 9, 1989

This is to certify that Marge and Bill Bishop have advanced Prophecy Countdown, Inc., \$30,000 on March 9, 1989 to pay WCPX-TV, Channel 6 charges. This amount will be repaid on March 15, 1989 from closing proceeds from home at 1940 Curling Avenue, Naples, Florida.

Signed 
Dianne Osborne
as Secretary/Treasurer of
Prophecy Countdown, Inc.

Notarized by 

NOTARY PUBLIC, STATE OF FLORIDA.
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES: OCT. 5, 1991.
BONDED THRU NOTARY PUBLIC UNDERWRITERS.

A television ministry supported by Seventh-day Adventist laymen — world wide

AULLS AND GRAVES, P. A.

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

MORTON D. AULLS, P. A.
MICHAEL A. GRAVES, P. A.14229 U. S. HIGHWAY 441
TAVARES, FLORIDA 32778TELEPHONE (904) 343-0770
FAX (904) 343-6008

July 11, 1990

Prophecy Countdown, Inc.

P.O. Box 1844

Altoona, FL 32707

Attn: Jack Wright

Chairman of the Board

Re: Bishop vs. Prophecy Countdown

Dear Mr. Wright:

The undersigned represents Mr. and Mrs. Bill Bishop in regard to two promissory notes from your corporation to them. You will find copies of those notes enclosed. As is apparent from the face of the notes they are both overdue. Please consider this letter a demand that the balance and accrued interest be paid forthwith to my clients.

If I do not hear from you or your attorney within ten days, my clients will have no choice except to institute civil proceedings for the collections of these amounts.

Very truly yours,

Morton D. Aulls

MDA/apj
Enclosure

RECEIVED IN EVIDENCE

AS PLAINTIFFS DEFENDENTSEXHIBIT DON F. BRIGGS
CIRCUIT JUDGE

August 8, 1988

\$16,000.00

The undersigned, promise to pay to the order of BILLY BISHOP and MARGARET BISHOP, husband and wife, at 39519 Golden Gem, Umatilla, Florida 32784, the sum of SIXTEEN THOUSAND and 00/100 DOLLARS in lawful money of the United States of America.

This note shall be payable as follows:

The entire principal amount shall be due in ninety (90) days from the date of the note. Prepayment of any amount may be made at any time without penalty.

BY

John Osborne, Jr.
John Osborne, Jr. as President of Prophecy Countdown, Inc.

BY

Dianna Osborne
Dianna I Osborne as Secretary/Treasurer of Prophecy Countdown, Inc.

Notary:

Patricia Edwards

NOTARY PUBLIC, STATE OF FLORIDA.
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES: OCT. 5, 1991.
BOUNDED THRU NOTARY PUBLIC UNDERWRITERS.

RECEIVED IN EVIDENCE

AS PLAINTIFFS DEFENDENTSEXHIBIT DON F. BRIGGS
CIRCUIT JUDGE

FILED
FEB 15 3 25 PM '91
CLERK
AND CO.
TAVARES

Phone
1-800-HIS LOVE • (904) 669-3293
Mailing Address
P.O. Box 1844 • Grand Island, FL 32755
Street Address
17120 S.E. Hwy. 450 • Umatilla, FL 32784
(7 Mi. N.W. of Umatilla on 450)

Prophecy Countdown, Inc.

April 4, 1989

We, the officers of GULFCOAST CONSORTIUM, INC., do hereby pledge to purchase the video equipment now being leased from, and owned by, PROPHECY COUNTDOWN, INC. for the agreed price of \$75,000 cash, in full, by April 30, 1989.

John Osborne, Jr. President
of Prophecy Countdown, Inc.

President
Gulfcost Consortium, Inc.

William J. Burn Vice President

Secretary

Treasurer

Phone
1-800-HIS LOVE • (904) 669-3293
Mailing Address
P.O. Box 1844 • Grand Island, FL 32755
Street Address
17120 S.E. Hwy. 450 • Umatilla, FL 32784
(7 Mi. N.W. of Umatilla on 450)

Prophecy Countdown, Inc.

April 5, 1989

We, the officers of PROPHECY COUNTDOWN, INC., do hereby pledge to repay Billy and Margaret Bishop \$30,000 plus interest figured at 10% per year, within 30 days of the signing of this agreement.

John Osborne, President

Dianne Osborne, Treasurer



Notary: Patricia Edwards

NOTARY PUBLIC, STATE OF FLORIDA.
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES: OCT. 5, 1991.
BONDED THRU NOTARY PUBLIC UNDERWRITERS.

Date: April 4, 1989

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
OF FLORIDA, IN AND FOR LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA

CIVIL ACTION

BILLY BISHOP and MARGARET BISHOP

CASE No. 90-1797-CA01

Plaintiff

—VS—

PROPHECY COUNTDOWN, a Florida

Corporation, JOHN W. OSBORNE, JR.,

and DIANNE OSBORNE, his wife,

Defendant

RECEIVED
SHERIFFS DEPT.
LAKE COUNTY FLA.
91 MAR 12 PM 11 42

EXECUTION

THE STATE OF FLORIDA:

TO ALL AND SINGULAR THE SHERIFFS OF SAID STATE:

GREETINGS:

YOU ARE HEREBY COMMANDED to levy on the goods and chattels, lands and tenements
of PROPHECY COUNTDOWN, a Florida corporation,

in the sum of \$ 39,011.58

with legal interest thereon from February 25, 1991 until paid and that you
have this writ before said court when satisfied.

WITNESS my hand and the seal of said Court on March 11, 1991

JAMES C. WATKINS
Clerk Circuit Court

By:

Pamela Burnett

As Deputy Clerk

(Court Seal)

(See Attached or Use Reverse Side For Return Information)

FILED
APR 17 8 17 AM '91
CLERK
AND DEPT.
TAVAN

1740
Book # 8729

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND
FOR LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA

CASE NO. 90-1797-CA01

BILLY BISHOP and MARGARET
BISHOP,
Plaintiffs

vs.

PROPHECY COUNTDOWN, a Florida
corporation, JOHN W. OSBORNE, JR.
and DIANNE OSBORNE, his wife,
Defendants

and

UNITED SOUTHERN BANK,
Garnishee.

FILED
MAR 15 2 34 PM '91
CLERK OF CIRCUIT
AND COUNTY COURTS
LAKE COUNTY
TAVARES FLORIDA

WRIT OF GARNISHMENT

THE STATE OF FLORIDA:

To All and Singular the Sheriffs of the State:

YOU ARE COMMANDED to summon garnishee, UNITED SOUTHERN BANK, to serve an answer to this writ on Morton D. Aulls, plaintiffs' attorney, whose address is 14229 U.S. Highway 441, Tavares, FL 32778, within 20 days after service on the garnishee, exclusive of the day of service, and to file the original with the Clerk of this Court either before service on the attorney or immediately thereafter, stating whether the garnishee is indebted to defendants, PROPHECY COUNTDOWN, a Florida corporation, at the time of the answer or was indebted at the time of service of the writ, or at any time between such times, and in what sum and what tangible and

intangible personal property of the defendants the garnishee has in its possession or control at the time of the answer or had at the time of service of this writ, or at any time between such times, and whether the garnishee knows of any person indebted to the defendants or who may have any of the property of the defendants in its possession or control. The amount set in plaintiffs' motion is \$29,011.58 together with 12 percent per annum since the date of the judgment, February 25, 1991.

WITNESS my hand and the seal of this Court on Mar. 12, 1991.

JAMES C. WATKINS
As Clerk of the Court

By: Pamela Burnett

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF THE
STATE OF FLORIDA IN AND FOR LAKE COUNTY

CASE NO. 90-1797-CA01

BILLY BISHOP and MARGARET
BISHOP

vs.

PROPHECY COUNTDOWN, JOHN
W. OSBORNE, JR. and
DIANE OSBORNE and
UNITED SOUTHERN BANK

AFFIDAVIT OF SERVICE

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF LAKE

Personally appeared before me the undersigned
MERVYN J. RIKER, who being first duly sworn by me says:

1. That he is a citizen of the County of Lake and State of
Florida, and being a competent person, not interested in the above
styled cause.
2. That the affiant did lawfully, pursuant to rules and
statutes, make proper service upon the said:

UNITED SOUTHERN BANK

at 3:10 p.m.

on the 12th day of March, 19 91

at Highway 19, Umatilla, Florida

of the WRIT OF GARNISHMENT, MOTION FOR WRIT OF GARNISHMENT AFTER

JUDGEMENT

and that the said service was made upon the said:

UNITED SOUTHERN BANK in the following

manner: The papers to be served were served

upon Pat Carpenter, who accepted service for UNITED SOUTHERN

BANK

I do hereby state under oath that the above facts are true and
correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Mervyn J. Riker
MERVYN J. RIKER

Lake Investigation Agency
Post Office Box 822
Tavares, Florida 32778
(904) 343 - 1372

Sworn to and subscribed before me
this 14th day of March
19 91.

Arthur T. Riker
Notary Public
My Commission Expires: 10-12-93

FILED

MAR 20 2 00 PM '91

CLERK
AND COURT
LAKE
TAVARES

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND
FOR LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA

CASE NO. 90-1797-CA01

BILLY BISHOP and MARGARET
BISHOP,
Plaintiffs

vs.

PROPHECY COUNTDOWN, a Florida
corporation, JOHN W. OSBORNE, JR.,
and DIANE OSBORNE, his wife,
Defendants

and

UNITED SOUTHERN BANK,
Garnishee.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY on the 20thday of March, 1991, a
true and correct copy of the Motion for Writ of Garnishment,
Writ of Garnishment, Answer of Garnishee, and a Notice to
Defendant were served on the defendant at P.O. Box 1844,
Grand Island, FL 32735 (1250 New Hwy. 441 S., Mount Dora, FL
32757) and on the defendant's attorney, Larry D. Houston,
Houston and Houston, P.A., P.O. Box 208, Belleview, FL 32620.

MORTON D. AULLS

Aulls & Graves, P.A.
14229 U.S. Highway 441
Tavares, FL 32778
(904) 343-0770
Florida Bar No. 103429

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND
FOR LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA

CASE NO. 90-1797-CA01

BILLY BISHOP and MARGARET BISHOP,

Plaintiff,

vs.

PROPHECY COUNTDOWN, a Florida corporation,
JOHN W. OSBORNE, JR. and DIANNE OSBORNE,
his wife,

Defendants,

and

UNITED SOUTHERN BANK,

Garnishee.

ANSWER TO WRIT OF GARNISHMENT

Garnishee, UNITED SOUTHERN BANK, by and through its undersigned attorney,
heraby answers the Writ of Garnishment served on it the 12th day of March, 1991, as
follows:

1. At the time of the service of the Writ of Garnishment and at all times
subsequent to such service, up to and including the time of the preparation of this
Answer, Garnishee's records reflect that it was indebted to PROPHECY COUNTDOWN, INC.
for account numbers 0133558, 0133795, and 0141216. The addresses reflected on
Garnishee's records are 1250 N. Hwy. 441 South, Mt. Dora, FL 32757 and P.O. Box 1844,
Grand Island, FL 32735.

2. Garnishee is holding the sum of \$9,039.95 in said accounts until further
instructions from the Court.

3. Garnishee knows of no other person indebted to Defendant PROPHECY
COUNTDOWN, INC. or any other person who may have any effects, goods, money or
chattels of the said Defendant, nor does the Garnishee have in its possession of control
any tangible personal property of the Defendant PROPHECY COUNTDOWN, INC. other than
as stated above.

4. Having fully answered the Writ of Garnishment served upon it, Garnishee
requests that the attorney's fee deposited with the Clerk of Court in the sum of
\$100.00 be paid to its attorney MAGGIE B. EVANS for services rendered.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true and correct copy of the foregoing has been
furnished by United States Mail to Morton D. Aulls, Esq., 14229 U.S. Highway 441,
Tavares, FL 32778; this 13th day of March, 1991.

Maggie B. Evans
Maggie B. Evans,
MAGGIE B. EVANS, P.A.
P.O. Box 6
Mt. Dora, FL 32757
(904) 735-1684
Florida Bar #377945
Attorney for Garnishee

FILED
MAR 14 11 08 AM '91
CLERK OF DISTRICT COURT
LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA
TAVARES, FL

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND
FOR LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO. 90-1797-CA-01

BILLY BISHOP and MARGARET BISHOP,
Plaintiffs,

vs.

PROPHECY COUNTDOWN, a Florida Corporation,
JOHN W. OSBORNE, JR., and DIANNE OSBORNE,
his wife,
Defendants,

and

UNITED SOUTHERN BANK,
Garnishee.

FILED
MAR 28 2 14 PM '91
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT
AND COUNTY COURTS
LAKE COUNTY
TAVARES, FLORIDA

STIPULATION

COMES NOW the plaintiffs and defendant and would stipulate as follows:

1. A Writ of Garnishment was served on United Southern Bank. United Southern Bank has filed their answer indicating that they have \$9,039.95 that they are holding until further instructions from the Court in regard to the garnishment.

2. Plaintiffs and defendant stipulate and agree that the Court may enter its order forthwith directing United Southern Bank, as garnishee, to pay said amount to Morton D. Aulls as attorney for Billy Bishop and Margaret Bishop, his wife, at 14229 U.S. Highway 441, Tavares, FL 32778.

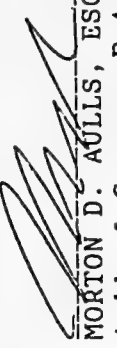
3. It is further agreed that the Court shall order the Clerk to forthwith pay the \$100.00 deposit, being held by the Clerk, directly to Maggie B. Evans, as attorney for the

garnishee for the statutory fee set forth in this cause at P.O. Box 6, Mt. Dora, FL 32757.

4. It is agreed further that the plaintiffs incurred costs in the amount of \$176.00 in this cause.

DATED this 28 day of March, 1991


LARRY D. HOUSTON
Houston & Houston, P.A.
P.O. Box 208
Bellevue, FL 32620


MORTON D. AULLS, ESQUIRE
Aulls & Graves, P.A.
14229 U.S. Highway 441
Tavares, Florida 32778-4303
(904) 343-0770
Florida Bar # 103429

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true and correct copy of the foregoing has been forwarded by U.S. mail/hand delivery to LARRY D. HOUSTON, P.O. Box 208, Bellevue, FL 32620 and MAGGIE B. EVANS, P.O. Box 6, Mt. Dora, FL 32757, this 28 day of March, 1991.

ab322



BOOK 1101 PAGE 2025

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND
FOR LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO. 90-1797-CA-01

91 16095

BILLY BISHOP and MARGARET BISHOP,
Plaintiffs,

vs.

PROPHECY COUNTDOWN, a Florida Corporation,
JOHN W. OSBORNE, JR., and DIANNE OSBORNE,
his wife,
Defendants,

and

UNITED SOUTHERN BANK,
Garnishee.

FILED
MAR 28 2 14 PM '91
CLERK OF COURT
AND COUNTY CLERK
LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA

ORDER

THIS CAUSE coming on to be heard upon the Writ of
Garnishment issued by the Clerk pursuant to the motion filed
by the plaintiff, the Answer to Writ of Garnishment, filed by
United Southern Bank, as garnishee, and the Stipulation
entered into by the plaintiffs and the defendant and the
Court being duly advised, it is hereby

ORDERED AND ADJUDGED as follows:

1. United Southern Bank, as garnishee, is authorized
and directed to forthwith pay the sum of \$9,039.95 that they
are presently holding to Morton D. Aulls, Aulls & Graves,
P.A., 14229 U.S. Highway 441, Tavares, FL 32778, as attorney
for the plaintiffs in this cause.

BOOK 1101 PAGE 2026

2. The Clerk is directed to forthwith pay the \$100.00
deposit being held by the Clerk, pursuant to the Florida
Statutes, as a deposit for the garnishees attorney's fees to
Maggie D. Evans, P.O. Box 6, Mt. Dora, FL 32757.

DONE AND ORDERED in Tavares, Lake County, Florida, this
28 day of March, 1991.

[Signature]

Circuit Judge

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true and correct copy of the
foregoing has been forwarded by U.S. mail/hand delivery to
MORTON D. AULLS, Aulls & Graves, P.A., 14229 U.S. Highway
441, Tavares, FL 32778, LARRY D. HOUSTON, ESQUIRE, P.O. Box
208, Belleview, FL 32620 and MAGGIE B. EVANS, P.O. Box 6,
Mt. Dora, FL 32757, this 28 day of March, 1991.

[Signature]

ab322

APR 3 1 23 PM '91

[Signature]

SATISFACTION OF JUDGEMENT
(BY INDIVIDUAL)

RANCO FORM 111

Satisfaction of Judgment

BILLY BISHOP and MARGARET
BISHOP,

Plaintiffs

PROPHECY COUNTDOWN, a Florida Corp
JOHN W. OSBORNE, JR. and DIANNE
OSBORNE, his wife

Defendants

Case No. 90-1797-CA-0185

In CIRCUIT

LAKE

State of Florida.

No. 17 Court,
County,
April 91RECORDED
SHERIFF'S DEPT.
LAKE COUNTY FLA.
91 APR 10 AM 5:57

Know All Men by These Presents: That we, BILLY BISHOP and

(1, We)

MARGARET BISHOP,

the plaintiffs in

the above styled cause, wherein a judgment was rendered on the 25th day of February

A. D. 19 91 in the above named court for \$38,828.88

DOLLARS

and costs, against PROPHECY COUNTDOWN, a Florida Corporation,

the defendant s therein, said judgment being duly recorded in the minutes of said Court and a copy thereof

having been recorded in

Book number 1098 , Page 1806 , of the

public records of LAKE

County, Florida, do hereby acknowledge full payment and satis-

faction thereof and hereby consent that the same shall be satisfied of record.

Witness our hand and seal, this 9 day of April, A. D. 19 91

Signed, Sealed and Delivered in Presence of:

WITNESS

WITNESS

x Billy Bishop

BILLY BISHOP

L.S.

Margaret Bishop

MARGARET BISHOP

L.S.

STATE OF FLORIDA,
COUNTY OF LAKE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this day, before me, an

officer duly authorized in the State aforesaid and in the County aforesaid to take acknowledgments, personally appeared

BILLY BISHOP and MARGARET BISHOP

to me known to be the person s described in and who executed the foregoing Satisfaction of Judgment and
acknowledged before me that they executed the same.

WITNESS my hand and official seal in the County and State last aforesaid this 9th day of April A. D. 19 91

NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission Expires:

(SEAL)

NOTARY PUBLIC, STATE OF FLORIDA.

MY COMMISSION EXPIRES: JAN. 14, 1993.

BONDED, TRUE NOTARY PUBLIC UNDERWRITERS.

This Instrument prepared by:
AddressMorton D. Aulls, P.A.
1429 U.S. Highway 411
Tallahassee, FL 32378

301

APPENDIX XXXII

**FLORIDA CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
ACTION 90-55**

Florida Conference Executive Committee
Minutes - June 24, 1990

90-54
PROPHECY COUNTDOWN -
RELATIONSHIP WITH
FLORIDA CONFERENCE:

Voted to ask the Media Committee appointed under Executive Committee Action 89-57, with the exception of George Powell to function under the chairmanship of John Thurber to deal with Independent Ministries and bring a recommendation with regard to our relationship to Prophecy Countdown. The Committee is as follows: John Thurber, chairman; Rose Beavers, Hamilton Boyd, Charles Gall, Frank McMillan, Eugene Torres and the three conference officers.

90-55
JOHN OSBORNE AND
ROLLING HILLS COMPANY:

Due to recent public activity by John Osborne that we feel does not correctly represent the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists or its employees, VOTED to withdraw the appointment of John Osborne as lay leader of the Rolling Hills Company.

APPENDIX XXXIII

LETTER TO JACK WRIGHT FROM DENNIS MC KEEVER

Jack Wright
Chairman of the Board
Prophecy Countdown

Dear Jack,

This is a compilation of some of the events at PC that culminated in our resignation that you requested.

I began employment at PC on October 17, 1989. I had helped PC convert from a manual system of accounting to a computer based system in my spare time at night and Sundays while I was still working at Martin Marietta. John offered me a position as assistant pastor and director of the planned evangelism center that he was beginning at PC. He told me that I would work under Bill Bishop and if I had any problems that could not be resolved at that level, his door was always open. Elaine and I had already begun to make plans to get into full time work whenever the Lord opened the doors. We had spent a year helping United Prison Ministry set up its work in Florida while we were also helping PC. So when John offered me this opportunity, we felt that the Lord was leading. We had heard many stories about PC from different ones so I invited Bill Bishop (associate pastor) and Jim Purple (Chairman of the board) to my home to see what they had to say and they said everything was above board. So we felt that we could join PC.

When it came time to give my notice to Martin, I had been hearing some rumors about financial difficulties at PC so I went to John to see if he wanted me to delay coming on board until January. He was emphatic in his answer. He wanted me to begin his evangelistic center and wanted me to start it immediately. So I gave my notice at Martin and began at PC on October 17, 1989.

My first day at PC was eventful. I hadn't even unpacked all of my things when John came in and sat down and said, "Is it to late for you to go back to Martin?" Even though I was taken back by his statement, I said, "John, I didn't leave Martin to work for Prophecy Countdown. I left Martin to work for the Lord. If I don't do it here I'll go some where else." John said that he appreciated that attitude and then asked me to just hang in there and he would try to work things out. John said the board when they met the week before had really chewed him out for hiring me when they couldn't pay the staff they had. What he didn't tell me at that time was that the board had actually laid off four people at that meeting. You can see that in addendum one. In other words, he did not bother to analyze the financial situation when he hired me or check to see if it was feasible. The reason I bring this up is because this pattern of unconcern about the financial condition of PC when it would limit what he wanted to do came up time and again.

You can also see in the minutes for October 13, 1989 that they made a non-refundable deposit of \$50,000 with another payment of \$25,000 trying to buy the building on Rt. 441 which they lost because they were not able to come up with the rest of the money to buy the building in time. That money was gone. When the building was finally purchased many months later it was from Mr. Harris not the Silkworth's. We rented it from Mr. Harris for many months. What is not stated there is that they spent another \$25,000 to remodel the inside and had us move in before they even had bought it. The above \$75,000 dollars lost to the Silkworth's is mentioned again in addendum B dated January 4, 1990. Also mentioned in January 4th's minutes was John's attempt to get the board to sign a contract with channel 68 at \$3,000 dollars a week. The board had to say no. This was at a time when we couldn't even come up with the rent.

Addendum C minutes dated December 7, 1989 show that the escrow to purchase the building was returned to the original people except for your mother's \$20,000. And Jack, you know the difficult time it was for you to get them to pay her back at the agreed amount and on time. And to have her tell me that John doesn't even speak to her when he sees her in church and this has caused her to quit coming, that really hurt.

Now, Jack I would like to take you through the first few months of my being on the board to see what was happening. As you can see in Addendum E minutes dated December 27, 1989, you will see the discussion that John brought up about buying the Silkworth property next door to PC. To anyone it was obvious in our situation we couldn't consider buying anything. In the same minutes we discussed having to get a cheaper place to rent and get out of this one. We had to vote him down on starting his new program also. See page two. Yet in Addendum F, John is still trying to purchase the million dollar property from the Silkworth's. In addendum G, you can see that we hadn't paid the back bills for PTL. In order to get back on we had to pay \$500 for the back debt each week.

On Addendum H you will notice that John came in to the board with the contract in his hand for us to approve to put Closer Look on channel 52 on prime time. The figure is not listed but you will recall it was a lot more than we had. Of course the board voted it down. Look at the chart for that time frame. We took in less than \$30,000 for the whole month of January. Then in Addendum I, he tries to talk us in to signing a 52 week contract to air Closer Look. Of course we couldn't and voted it down.

Jack, I must have been sleeping on this one. Addendum J mentions the by-laws stating that PC needed members. I didn't realize that there were none and that the by-laws were changed to state that the members of the corporation are to be the board members. In other words, there is no independent members to select the board of PC. The members are the board. And not only that, but the board members are all PC employees. So PC can fire someone and they are off the board. Jack you know that is not the proper way to set up a ministry unless of course it is to be run like a closed cult. Also, in those minutes, John tries again to get us to sign a contract even though we can't even pay the rent.

As you can see by addendum M, as of August 16 they don't even have a teacher and are actually going to put a non-adventist who was pregnant out-of-wedlock in charge of it.

Now look at addendum N. In the minutes it even states that you Jack along with Howard, Patti, and Dianne met on August 21, concerning a school and decided amongst yourselves that any children that would be on the premises would have to be upstairs with the other students. Patti came and told my wife who came and told me. Jack, I was in the building at the time of that meeting and should have been included because that was a board decision and I was a board member. That kind of meeting even in the world would be wrong and unethical. And I stated that in my resignation. Because you asked me to stay on at least through campmeeting I reconsidered my resignation on condition that the board approve having a school and list the requirement that all staff children have to be in it. As you can see in addendum O, the board that afternoon of August 22 voted to have a school with a non-adventist, pregnant out-of-wedlock, teacher. Also notice on page 2, that it was then resolved to write the school policy, cost, etc. for the Prophecy Countdown school. What a way to do business. As you will notice on addendum P, I removed my resignation and stated that as long as I'm at PC I will abide by the decision of the board. The reason I bring this up Jack, is because it is indicative of the many other times that things were done by them behind the scenes and then by deception, they try to slip it through the board.

Remember the Terry Ross situation. How many times they pulled his chain, only for it to fall through. The most glaring case was when they called him on a Wednesday and offered him and his wife a job and said it would be no problem getting it through the board. Well Terry called me that Wednesday night to let me know because he had stayed with me a week when he was down earlier in the year to look the place over, so he thought that I as a board member would know about his being hired. I told him that I didn't know anything about it. So I told him that I would not say anything about him calling me and would let him know what came up at the board meeting the next Monday. That Monday, John starts it off by saying that he needs a secretary to help him with his video productions and that he thinks that Kathy Ross would be a good choice. They could find different things for Terry to do.

Howard brought up the expense of moving them all the way from Oregon to here when he felt that there was a person right here locally who could do the job. After discussion John finally agreed it would be better to get somebody locally and then said that somebody, Dianne or Patti, needed to call Terry and let him know. That's when I said, "What do we owe Terry Ross." Then Dianne said that Terry Ross called them on Friday and during the conversation Dianne just happened to mention that they were interested in hiring them but would bring it up to the board Monday. So I let it drop. But got back with Terry and he was really upset. I told him that Dianne was to call him and tell him but it was Patti who did it instead. That's why he sent that letter to the board with a copy of the phone conversation when John and Dianne had actually called him on the previous Wednesday. I have attached that in case you have lost yours. In other words, that was a deliberate deception on John's and Dianne's part to the board. See addendum P and the tape.

Look at addendum K Jack. Even in the minutes it shows that we can't even pay the rent and Mr. Harris wants us out right away, and John keeps pressuring the board to sign contracts. Jack this was not right. And all this time we were requesting to have a financial statement so we could analyze where the funds were going and yet even as late as December of 1990 we never had one.

Jack, I can not in good conscience go along with a closed system that doesn't allow for independent thought or input unless it goes along with their whims. When I first started at PC Joe Crews was putting on a series at Groveland in November of 1989. He stopped in to see John and when he left we talked a little and said good bye. Then when I got on the board, John said that Joe Crews at that meeting railed against John about the things he was doing wrong and eyed his wife up and down because she had make-up on and told us that PC would have nothing to do with Amazing Facts again. Looking back on it, that's when I should have walked out and resigned. In November when I was looking into going to Hartland, I got with Joe and he told me that John had asked him to tell him why his ministry was in such deep trouble because Joe was the only friend he had left in Independent Ministries. Joe said he told John about his back and forth involvement with the conference and his impulsiveness were at the root of his problems. And Joe said that he didn't eye John's wife up and down or rail against John. He was there at John's request. Somehow Jack, I believe Joe's rendition of the meeting.

Do you remember the incident at the board meeting dealing with the setting up of the auditorium for PCTN when we questioned the over spending that was happening and he got mad and stomped out and drove off and Dianne comes in and says we shouldn't be so volatile. Remember the time he called Phil Draper an S.O.B during the board meeting? Do you remember the church board meeting where an elder and John were getting into and argument about having some other people give special music and he got angry because all he wanted was professional singers so as chairman of the church board I stated that all positions had been adequately stated so let's go on to the next item and he looked at me with that demonic look and said "I decide when we go on!" So I put together my things and was preparing to walk out when he apologized for his outburst. I have attached addendum L, a letter from one of the other elders at that church board meeting to refresh your memory. Of course I know you have many experiences of your own along these lines.

As you know, I first resigned from PC on August 22, 1990. During our broadcast of PCTN John had made an announcement that the Rolling Hills Church was looking for a teacher for its school this coming fall. I couldn't believe it. The church board or the PC board had not voted to have a school at all. As you recall we still owed \$13,000 dollars to the conference for John and Dianne's ill fated attempt to have a church school the previous fall and I took the task of supervising them during the 1990 spring term in the office next to mine. As the summer progressed Dianne and Patty kept talking about having a school. Yet no vote had been taken by either board to have one. As far as I was concerned this was their own independent school that they were setting up. It came time for school to start the first of August and I set up my daughter to be in my office to continue her home school courses just like we had done in the spring.

I told her that if we decide to go we would have to sell our home so we would have plenty of time to train our replacements. On Friday, 12/21 Patti calls us in to tell us that my last day as an employee would be the 28th. And if they needed me they would contract out my labor. Elaine could stay and train her replacement and then work for her replacement until she left. I informed Patti that we hadn't even made our final decision yet, that we had stated that Monday was decision day. I want you to understand Jack, that through out all of this there was no consultation with Elaine or I on any of the decisions PC was making in regards to us. I told Patti if next Friday was my last day that I would not be available for contract labor because I would be out getting a job so I would have an income until the house sold. Another example of the managerial incompetence of PC management. I believe you worked out a compromise and they changed their minds and were going to give us 30 days which is what it should have been anyway.

On January 2, after I had prayer meeting, John called me downstairs and put on his act about how he was sorry for the things he had done and said and wouldn't I please consider setting up a health ministry here at PC instead of going to Hartland to do it. I felt that I owed it to the people at the Rolling Hills church to see if the Lord wanted us to stay at PC.

So I told John that I would submit a proposal on Monday of the conditions for remaining at PC and heading up a health ministry. You can see the details in addendum R. When Elaine saw the look in John's eyes when he came into your office and used the f--- words and took the Lord's name in vain, that settled it. She wanted no more to do with PC. You see, one of the hard decisions we had to make was to leave our sons and their wives, plus a grandchild on the way, plus all our relatives are in Florida, but after that outburst Elaine knew our fleece had been answered. I then submitted my final resignation.

Jack, there were many little situations that happened that all put together caused me to lose respect for John as a Pastor and as an administrator and his wife also. They turn friends into enemies by their arrogance and vanity and deception. They have such exalted ideas of themselves that any critique by anyone including respected heads of other ministries is taken as an offense and those individuals become suspect as enemies. John and Dianne always complain how terrible people are to them especially those who used to work for them. Jack, the love and respect they covet can only be won by their own application and effort of true goodness, kindness, and humility. They have exalted ideas of their own merits, and think everyone should treat them accordingly. They are always looking for slights and if something is said even harmlessly they feel sure it was designed to hurt them. I believe they would rather be unloved than to put forth the effort necessary to subdue their wrong traits, and gain strength of character. I believe that John would rather be lost with praise than saved with criticism. They are looking at the world through their own character traits.

On August 30, 1990 we as a board went to Hartland Institute to meet with their administrative committee to discuss the many allegations against John. And at that meeting for the first time I found out that the reason we didn't have a campmeeting in Florida at the Umatilla property was because John had told Obed Graham that he would not because he was reconciling with the conference and even sent letters to other Independent ministries telling them they weren't going to be invited. I was shocked. John had told us elders that the reason we weren't having a campmeeting that year was because of the problems that he was having with the Danielsons over the property. That was the second time I learned something from outside sources that I should have known as a board member. The second one was when we sat in the Florida conference office and John is on his high horse and the conference official tells John that if his ministry is on the up and up then why isn't he paying Bill Bishop back the money he owed him? John was speechless, remember. As a board member I had no idea that we were not paying Bill what was owed him. That's because we had never got a financial balance sheet of where the money was going. Jack, that is an unacceptable situation. And to find this out in the conference office was embarrassing. Of course you know that Bill Bishop sued Prophecy Countdown for his money and won. What an embarrassment. But back to Hartland. When the meeting was over they gave some suggestions for John to do that would allow Hartland to give there support to PC. One was a polygraph test. After all, Colin stated, didn't John publicly say that Morris Venden should take one. They also asked for a legal financial statement that would show where the money goes.

As you remember Jack, at the board meeting addendum Q, John made his remark about them suggesting he take a poly-graph test with the exclamation that "they're all sanctimonious creeps". I raised an objection to that statement and said that they were only giving their perspective of how to persuade their board to support PC. John than said, "Ok, they're just pharisees". I forgot about the statement he made as we were driving out of the driveway at Hartland. "Colin and Ron are to old and ugly to have sexual allegations brought against them". Then John has a polygraph test done 30 days later and then it's a good idea. Of course a financial statement has never been forthcoming. I remember the remark in a board meeting about who to have at campmeeting and I recommended Ralph Larson and John remarked that he's getting to old and always talks on the same topics. Dianne said he should be invited because he lends credibility to the campmeeting. John gave in. Jack, these kind of statements are not from a man of God.

Jack, the situations at the campmeeting itself are to many to cover. But that brings us down to the time I talked to the Hartland representative at the campmeeting about their ministry. I then set up a meeting with them while we were on vacation. We met with them and came back home to pray about it. I immediately notified PC board at the next board meeting that we were considering going to Hartland and that we would know if they accepted our application in a week. On 12/18 I told Patti that Hartland had extended us an offer to come there. I told her that Elaine and I would make our final decision on Monday, December 24.

From Dennis McKeever
Assistant Pastor
Rolling Hills Church

ADDENDUM TO LETTER OF RESIGNATION

01/16/91

PROPHECY COUNTDOWN BOARD

Dear Board Chairman,

The letter received from you has two errors in it. One is the reason why we resigned and the other is the date of January 5 in the next to the last paragraph on page one. When I submitted our resignation to the board chairman I explained in detail why it was being given. The reason is not accurately expressed in your reply so I will try to be more explicit.

After prayer meeting on January 2, 1991 John got with me and Elaine and asked us to consider remaining here at PC and organizing a health program rather than going to Hartland. We told him that we would consider the offer and let him know.

On Monday, January 7, I was in my office typing up our proposal for staying at PC. John came in and read the rough draft and said that he didn't see anything wrong with it and left. About ten minutes later he returned and asked me to remove the condition of not reporting to the office manager and he would take the heat and ask that I report to him. I told him that this was a condition that I wanted to be presented right from the beginning so there would be no misunderstanding. He stated that Dianne and Patti would not like this condition and that he was willing to take the heat for it. I again told him that I wanted this to be brought out now and not later. He then said that he would go to bat for me.

I submitted my proposal to you on Monday morning, January 7. About 4:00 PM that day, Dianne said to me, that because of the heavy board schedule that day and because John was having to make plans to go to Washington DC to pick up his father, they did not have time to go over my proposal but they would when he got back.

On Wednesday, January 9, Elaine happened to be out in the hall when John came out of Dianne's office and then went into Jack's office and slammed his fist on Jack's desk and said "You can tell your buddy he can have this g--- d--- ministry." He then went back out to where Dianne was standing and said "Let's get out of this f---ing place." Dianne did not go but John left and came back a few minutes later. Elaine came to me upset and said that it wasn't worth it. If our proposal could get Patti, Dianne, and John that upset, she no longer wanted to remain at PC. That is why Wednesday evening we decided to go through with our original decision to accept the call at Hartland no matter what the final outcome of our proposal would be.

On January 10, John apologized to Elaine for using foul and filthy language as a minister of the gospel. I typed up my resignation and submitted it on Friday morning January 11, 1991 and gave it to the Chairman of the board.

In other words, it was the incident of Wednesday, January 9, that made us decide not to reverse our decision to go to Hartland. This is the reason that I explained to the chairman of the board when I submitted my resignation on Friday, January 11 and is what we mean by the response of the office manager and president in the original resignation letter.

Sincerely yours,

Dennis McKeever
Dennis McKeever

Jack, they covet what they do not merit. It is as simple as that. They have a fortress mentality bordering on cultism and I believe that unless it is corrected by letting God work on their hearts, it will be their ruin.

Jack, you know that any of us are susceptible to the above problems in our own lives and I pray that they are not part of the reason for me writing this letter to you. I tried to do my best while there to the point of sitting in peoples homes while they were crying their eyes out over John's arrogance and lack of sympathy toward them and their families and trying to convince them to over look his character traits. But there came a time when I could no longer do it. It has been a tremendous relief to get involved in a ministry that, yes has problems, but the kind of problems that don't require you to hang your head or to be embarrassed to admit that your part of that ministry. I enjoyed tremendously working with you and the other elders at Rolling Hills in bringing that church from 50 members to over 200 members. And we love many of them dearly and had hoped we could have stayed at PC. But Jack, there came a time when my conscience could not justify my remaining there. I pray that you will understand. May God bless you in your ministry for Him.

Yours in the blessed hope,

Dennis McKeever
Dennis McKeever

APPENDIX XXXIV

**LETTER TO SUPPORTERS OF PROPHECY COUNTDOWN
FROM DENNIS MC KEEVER**

Phone
1-800-HIS LOVE • (904) 669-3293
Mailing Address
P.O. Box 1844 • Grand Island, FL 32735
Street Address
17120 S.E. Hwy. 450 • Umatilla, FL 32784
(7 Mi. N.W. of Umatilla on 450)

Rolling Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church

July 1, 1990

Dear Supporter of Prophecy Countdown:

Seven members of the Rolling Hills Church Board, including Pastor John Osborne, met with the President, Executive Secretary, and the Treasurer of the Florida Conference on Monday, June 25, 1990. At that time a statement was read by the President of the Florida Conference, from the Florida Conference Executive Committee; stating the removal of Pastor John Osborne as the lay-leader of the Rolling Hills Company. It was then stated that the over all reason for his removal was because of his public stand on the celebration issue.

Following the President's statement, the seven members of the Rolling Hills Church Board, including Pastor John Osborne, had a two hour discussion covering some of the issues of controversy with regards to the celebration worship style.

It was further stated that a sub-committee composed of members of the Executive Committee meet with Pastor John to reach some type of an acceptable conclusion to his public stand and beliefs regarding the celebration worship style issues.

Because of the decision from the Florida Conference, the Rolling Hills Church Board had a meeting called on Wednesday, June 27, 1990. The statement of the Executive Committee was read and discussed at length. A motion was made and unanimously accepted to keep Pastor John Osborne in his position as lay-leader of the Rolling Hills Church, and that a letter stating the same be sent to the Florida Conference Executive Committee. It was also voted, and accepted, to bring this issue before the church at-large Sabbath afternoon, June 30, 1990.

On Sabbath afternoon, June 30, at 1:30 P.M., the Rolling Hills Church Board Chairman, and the Prophecy Countdown Board Chairman presented the entire matter to the church at-large. The meeting was opened up for questions and discussion, and all were in agreement that nothing had been presented by the Florida Conference or the Executive Committee that would warrant Pastor John being removed.

The Prophecy Countdown Board will be scheduling a meeting with the Executive Committee's sub-committee to hear their position on Pastor John's public stand on the celebration worship style. Any further action by the Florida Conference with regard to this issue will be determined at that point.

Your intercessory prayers on behalf of Pastor John, and the faithful Seventh-day Adventist members of the Rolling Hills Church, are greatly needed during this trying time of God's church.

Your brother in Christ,



Pastor Dennis McKeever
Church Board Chairman

ems

Home of the PROPHECY COUNTDOWN Television Ministry

APPENDIX XXXV

LETTER TO DENNIS MC KEEVER FROM OBED O. GRAHAM



Florida Conference



of Seventh-day Adventists

August 31, 1990

Mr. Dennis McKeever
c/o PROPHECY COUNTDOWN
P. O. Box 1844
Grand Island, FL 32735

Dear Brother McKeever:

The Florida Conference Executive Committee has appointed a special committee to review the relationship between Prophecy Countdown, the Florida Conference and the Rolling Hills Company. That committee has reviewed your letter of July 20 suggesting a meeting.

I am requesting a meeting of the leadership of the Rolling Hills Company. Any of the members of the Board of Prophecy Countdown that are not in leadership roles of the Company are also invited to attend.

In response to your request for an agenda, I am enclosing the areas that I believe need to be discussed. In order to be able to focus the issues clearly and to have a meaningful dialogue, I am requesting that appropriate representatives from the Rolling Hills Company and Prophecy Countdown respond in writing to the enclosed agenda items before the meeting.

You have requested that you be told who will attend the meeting from the Conference sub-committee. That committee has recommended Pastor Eugene Torres, Rose Beavers and I serve as that representative group. In return, we would like for you to let us know those individuals who prepare the responses to the questions that we are raising.

I am requesting that this meeting be Sunday, September 9, at 9 a.m. there at the Prophecy Countdown office.

Yours sincerely,

O. O. Graham, President

mlc

Enc.

cc: Conference Executive Committee

P.O. Box 1313, Orlando, Florida 32802-1313 • 616 E. Rollins Street, Orlando, Florida 32803 • 407-898-7521

APPENDIX XXXVI

REPLY TO QUESTIONS FROM FLORIDA CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Phone
1-800-HIS-LOVE • (904) 735-1844
Mailing Address
P.O. Box 1844 • Grand Island, FL 32735
Street Address
1250 New Hwy. 441 S. • Mt. Dora, FL 32757

Rolling Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church

November 9, 1990

TO: Elder Obed Graham

FROM: Rolling Hills Church Board

SUBJECT: Reply to Questions from Florida Conference Committee

QUESTIONS FOR ROLLING HILLS COMPANY

Question Number 1:

The Rolling Hills Company, when originally organized, was meeting at Umatilla. When the offices of Prophecy Countdown were moved, the Company requested that they be permitted to use the facilities of Prophecy Countdown on Highway 441 in Mt. Dora. The Conference officers expressed concern as to the proximity to the Mt. Dora Church, but approved this move on a temporary basis.

What steps is the Company willing to take to secure other facilities for meeting at another place closer to the original location?

Answer:

Our church is growing by leaps and bounds. We have increased membership and attendance dramatically since our relocation one year ago. We have over 300 attending every Sabbath. In the last 90 days we have had in excess of 50 baptisms, and have many more scheduled for the weeks to come. We have a tremendous group of young adults forming witnessing teams to cover the Central Florida area. People's lives are being transformed. And backsliders are being reclaimed, old and young.

As far as close proximity between us and the Mt. Dora church (4 miles) -- there are Adventist churches all over this Conference and across the nation, and specifically in the Orlando area, that are closer to one another than the Mount Dora church to Rolling Hills.

We have people getting up at 5:00 every Sabbath morning, driving two and three hours here, and two and three hours back home. After one year of operation, we are convinced that the "distance" issue is no longer relevant.

As far as our plans for a facility. The church just formed a building committee, and hired an architect. We are making arrangements to build a 1000-seat worship center because attendance has increased so dramatically that we are pushing out the walls.

Question Number 2:

The Rolling Hills Company has refused to accept the action of the Conference Committee in removing John Osborne as lay leader and appointing Dennis McKeever in that capacity.

A. Does the leadership of the Rolling Hills Company acknowledge that the Conference Executive Committee has the responsibility and right (authority) to make this appointment?

Answer:

The Rolling Hills Company constituency, not just the leaders of the Company, voted unanimously to keep John Osborne as their pastor. They were shocked to hear of his removal without any input from them.

B. Assuming that this is the responsibility of the Committee, why should the action of the Company not be considered to be a refusal to recognize Church authority, or to submit to the order of the Church?

Answer:

We do not accept the assumption that the final responsibility rests with the Committee. The sheep have a right to have a say in the selection of their shepherd. If not, the Catholic church has had it right all along.

C. In election of officers by organized churches, there is not a need for grounds to be shown for an individual not to be re-elected to an office. Why does the Rolling Hills Company believe it is necessary for grounds to be set forth for action in appointment of the lay leader by the Conference Executive Committee?

Answer:

Why? Because the Rolling Hills constituency didn't have a say or a vote in having their pastor removed. A committee decided without any input from the constituency. There were no theological or moral grounds given for his removal, so it was not accepted.

Question Number 3:

At the present time, the Rolling Hills Company is not under the direct responsibility of any district pastor. If the Company should relocate to another facility for worship, will the members of the Company accept the leadership of a district pastor to be appointed by the Conference Committee?

Answer:

If the Company should relocate, and if they chose not to

have John Osborne as their pastor, they would then review any suggested replacements according to Biblical and Spirit of Prophecy guidelines.

11/8/90

QUESTIONS FOR JOHN OSBORNE PERSONALLYQuestion Number 1:

In the preparation of the "Celebration videos," how much direct contact did you have with individuals before production? For example, did you contact:

- A. Marvin Williams at Winter Springs Church?
- B. Chico Cotta regarding the Pathfinder Camporee?
- C. Dr. Donald Sahly or Dr. Marvin Robertson at Southern College?
- D. Any of the pastors who are alleged to be taking disciplinary action against those who are supporting you?

If the answer to any of these is "Yes," please describe the discussion. If "No," why didn't you?

Answer:

All these people just mentioned were shown to be responsible for leading our churches and young people into absolute apostasy from the counsel we have been given as Seventh-day Adventists. This question doesn't come right out and say it, but the Conference is obviously referring to Matthew 18:15-17 here. But Matthew 18:15-17 does not apply to those leading people into open sin. Matthew 18 is for dealing with private sin, but what these church leaders were involved in was anything but private. And if you've seen my past videos, you know exactly what I'm talking about.

Ellen White rebuked people by name, in public, for their open sin in the church, and she was persecuted for it. In 2T 15, she relates an incident involving a woman in one such incident:

"Her husband seemed to feel unreconciled to my bringing out her faults before the church and stated that if Sister White had followed the directions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 he should not have felt hurt: 'Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.'

1

"My husband then stated that he should understand that these words of our Lord had reference to cases of personal trespass, and could not be applied in the case of this sister. She had not trespassed against Sister White. But that which had been reproved publicly was public wrongs which threatened the prosperity of the church and the cause. Here, said my husband, is a text applicable to the case: I Timothy 5:20: 'Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.' " 2T 15.

Secret sin is dealt with privately -- but sin which "threatens the prosperity of the church," must be dealt with publicly.

Look at the situation with Achan. His disobedience to the counsel of God brought reproach upon the entire camp. Did Joshua "Matthew 18" Achan? No!

The major problem here is that these people don't know their Bible nor the Spirit of Prophecy. All you have to do is just read one section of 3T. It starts on page 265 and is entitled, "Duty to Reprove Sin." Here are just a few quotations from this section:

"In the case of Achan's sin God said to Joshua: 'Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.' How does this instance compare with the course pursued by those who will not raise their voice against sin and wrong, but whose sympathies are ever found with those who trouble the camp of Israel with their sins? Said God to Joshua: 'Thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.' He pronounced the punishment which would follow the transgression of his covenant." 3T 265

Now here are three more. I want you to read them closely, and see if you think I have any right to stand up and identify and rebuke open sin and apostasy in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today. And as I've said before -- if the independent ministries don't tell you, who will? 3T 267:

"Who are standing in the counsel of God at this time? Is it those who virtually excuse wrongs among the professed people of God and who murmur in their hearts, if not openly, against those who would reprove sin? Is it those who take their stand against them and sympathize with those who commit wrong? No, indeed! Unless they repent, and leave the work of Satan in oppressing those who have the burden of the work and in holding up the hands of sinners in Zion, they will never receive the mark of God's sealing approval. They will fall in the general destruction of the wicked . . .

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"The plain straight testimony must live in the church, or the curse of God will rest upon His people as surely as it did upon ancient Israel because of their sins. God holds His people, as a body, responsible for the sins existing in individuals among them. If the leaders of the church neglect to diligently search out the sins which bring the displeasure of God upon the body, they become responsible for these sins.

"Those who work in the fear of God to rid the church of hindrances and to correct grievous wrongs, that the people of God may see the necessity of abhorring sin and may prosper in purity, and that the name of God may be glorified, will ever meet with resisting influences from the unconsecrated." 3T 267

So, my answer to question Number 1 is: No! I have not contacted these men, because the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy make it plain I don't need to. They are dealing in open apostasy, which is contrary to the counsel given to this church in the Spirit of Prophecy, and which is threatening the spiritual prosperity of this church, and I will deal with it openly, before the church, without ever having to privately consult with them. Matthew 18 does not apply to our leadership leading our people into apostasy.

Question Number 2:

Please give the names and addresses of individuals whom pastors have forbidden to study (as mentioned in tape #3), or have been censured or disfellowshipped because of promoting your tapes.

Answer:

If I give you names and addresses, what are you going to do with them? Are you going to call the Conference leaders of these people and rebuke them? I could give you many names, but you wouldn't do anything with them. The only reason you're asking this question is to establish a basis to say John Osborne is lying.

We have record of the names and addresses of the persecuted Adventists across this nation, and can very quickly and easily produce hundreds of additional names -- we receive hundreds of letters every week. If I sent out a questionnaire to the thousands of historical Adventists who support us across this nation and around the world, we would get a tremendous amount of additional evidence -- names, addresses, churches, pastors, and conferences to further back this issue.

Now let's say we bring all this evidence down to the Conference office and pile it on the table. What are you going to do with it?

If you've got any question about how our historical Adventists are being persecuted across this nation, come answer our phones and read our mail. Then this question would be answered without a doubt; showing the persecution that is going on in this church.

Question Number 3:

You have mentioned on your tapes that hand clapping is one of the evidences of the "Celebration Church," or Pentecostalism, coming into the church. At your meetings at the Orlando Central Church, you led or participated in hand clapping for special music or some other reason. How do you relate your actions with your teaching?

Answer:

Well finally we've got a question that's worth answering. This one's got a little substance.

In October of 1989 I held an evangelistic series at the Orlando Central Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was the largest city-wide meeting since 1972. We had over 400 opening and closing nights -- and the attendance never dropped below 300 during the entire 5 weeks. Over 70 have now been baptized from those meetings, and it was truly an exciting series.

I interned as a public evangelist under Kenneth Cox, and I remember well him telling me the necessity of holding meetings in a public building and putting a non-Adventist audience at ease. To do this, the audience always clapped at our meetings, because Elder Cox said, "When the non-Adventist audience claps opening night, and nobody else does, they become very embarrassed." This is not the way to start things off.

So to keep these embarrassing moments from happening, the Adventists are told ahead of time to applaud. But this is just done in the evening meetings, never in the sacred Sabbath morning services.

Understand, because of my training under Elder Cox, I permitted clapping in my evangelistic series in October of '89. But this was months before I ever heard of "celebration" and started really studying this thing out in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. I have since come under so much conviction about applause, that I will never permit this in any of my religious meetings again.

I admit, that in years past I've been wrong in this matter of allowing applause in my public evening meetings. I am now convinced, from my study that it is not God's will for His people to be applauding in any sacred services.

"We must go to the people with the solid Word of God; and when they receive that Word, the Holy Spirit may come, but it always comes, as I have stated before, in a way that commends itself to the judgment of the people. In our speaking, our singing, and in all our spiritual exercises, we are to reveal that calmness and dignity and godly fear that actuates every true child of God." 2SM 43.

It's like so many Sunday preachers who have accepted the Sabbath. Just because they once kept Sunday doesn't condone it. God has now brought them into the new light of the Sabbath and they're preaching it to the world, and calling them out of Babylon. But be assured in all this, that I have never, ever, in all my eleven years as a minister, allowed clapping and applause in my sacred Sabbath morning services.

Let me ask you a question: Will you publicly tell your constituency that you have been in violation of counsel given to us by God in the applause at campmeeting, and in the music and entertainment found in the Youth Departments and Camporees? Are you willing to confess your mistakes openly, and -- publicly, like I have? But most importantly -- are you willing to stop doing it?

Question Number 4:

You have preached against Seventh-day Adventist members socializing with non-Adventist preachers. You have acknowledged that in 1989, while attending the ASI convention in Hawaii, you participated in a social event at the hotel by being a soloist, and otherwise mingling with non-Adventists at a secular "sing-a-long." Admittedly alcoholic beverages were being sold and consumed, even though you have stated that this was not a bar or lounge. How do you reconcile your words with these actions?

Answer:

It's sad to see how diligently you are searching out my life to see if you can find anything against me.

Now let's talk about this "terrible" thing I did in Hawaii some time back.

Point Number 1: it was not during the ASI Convention, but a week afterwards on another island. We figured that since we were already over there, we should spend a week of our vacation time to relax a little. I'll have to admit, I really enjoyed that week

in Hawaii with my family, and a few of my staff. (But it's these former staff members who are trying to damage me with this rumor.)

Here are the facts: We stayed at the Outrigger Hotel on Waikiki. In order to get to the elevators (taking you upstairs to your room), you must walk clear across the lobby, and around or through an open-air restaurant by the pool. Yes, they sell alcoholic beverages there, just as in Pizza Hut, Olive Garden, Disneyland, and in hundreds of other family places and restaurants around the world. Children, or anyone under 21 are not allowed in bars or nightclubs in the United States. If this were a bar or nightclub, how was my 12-year-old son allowed in this place?

One evening, my wife and my then 12-year-old son, Johnny, came through the lobby, and we heard this singing going on and looked on. There in the lobby restaurant was this girl holding a microphone singing off-key. Then an announcer took the microphone and said, "Is there anybody else out there who can sing? If you just look at the back of the menu on the table, you'll see all the songs we have accompaniment background tapes for. Pick out one and let's sing along."

Now you have to understand that by this time the three of us were "cracking up," because of how she sounded. We had our flowered shirts on, and I had just bought a Hawaiian hat with a flowered headband around it. Needless to say, we were thoroughly enjoying this Hawaiian restful relaxation for the first time in years.

About this time, the guy at the microphone said, "Hey, fellow with the flowered shirt and the hat! Pick out a song and come up here and sing." Well, anyway, somebody handed me a song list and I said, "Let me look at this first, get somebody else next." Some other guy sang next and then I sang a couple of songs I knew from 20 years ago (*By the Time I Get to Phoenix* and *Take Me Home, Country Roads*).

Looking back at this, I am once more reminded that my family and I have no privacy, and I cannot do what other people do. What would normally be perfectly innocent, becomes national scandal when done by me.

I'm not allowed to be a human being? I'm not allowed to let my hair down a little bit on a vacation 6,000 miles away from home? I'm not talking about sin. (Now, I realize that I probably shouldn't have sung these songs as a Seventh-day Adventist minister), but I am a real person, and I'm even going to tell you one more thing: it was enjoyable. It was not a tavern, or a night club. It was in a restaurant, during a sing-along, in the hotel

second coming, I would not use that word, because without being able to clarify the term, it would give a false or misleading idea of what was to be studied.

My assistant pastor, who was in the charismatic movement, tells me that the phrases, "baptism in the Holy Spirit", "praying in the Spirit", "singing in the Spirit", "upper room experience", almost universally mean: "speaking in tongues."

To give you an idea of how these buzz-words can be used and the problem that arises, here's some excerpts from the "Carter Report":

"Join the 'Carter Report' team for an extraordinary series on the 'Baptism of the Holy Spirit' . . . This is what these meetings are about -- a Supernatural Christianity."

Then you are asked if you can say "yes" to a series of questions. Here is one of the questions:

"Do you desire to receive the experience of Pentecost? If you answer, 'Yes,' then come to this Upper Room Encounter."

Going on:

"Elder Gary Williams, whom God is using in a mighty way in Oregon, will be our special guest speaker. With Elder John Carter, he will show you from the Word how to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Discover how to pray in the Spirit, worship in the Spirit, and sing in the Spirit. We emphasize -- these are not ordinary meetings."

That ad could be used by any pentecostal church in town to bring people in to receive the gift of tongues. The "baptism of the Holy Spirit" is not something you get by attending a meeting.

"Baptism of the Holy Spirit" and other pentecostal phrases will continue to raise red flags, and the motive and reasons behind their use will be investigated.

So I'm not against the use of these words or phrases in general, but in certain contexts they represent something that should be rejected and exposed.

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lobby, with my family, during our Hawaiian vacation. We did not socialize or even speak with any of the other people in the restaurant. It was a totally nebulous situation.

If I had it to do over, I wouldn't do it. But I really don't believe this is some awful thing you're trying to paint here, to discredit my stand on the celebration issue. Wouldn't it be more credible to discredit my theology on this issue and not try to dig up some human fault of my character?

Question Number 5:

You are critical of the terminology of "baptism of the Holy Spirit," yet Ellen G. White uses this phrase often. Please respond to this apparent contradiction.

Answer:

I have explained this in previous videos. But I'll explain it to you again. I mean, it's so obvious, I don't understand why you can't figure this out for yourself.

Words don't mean today what they did in Ellen White's day. For instance, let's take the word, "intercourse." Now the word intercourse is a wonderful word, but I don't hear any of you using that word in your speeches, sermons, or letters. Why is that? Because the word "intercourse" today doesn't mean what it did 100 years ago. But you find that word throughout her writings -- 100 times more than you find, "baptism of the Holy Spirit," but we never use it in the context she does.

It's the same way with the phrase "baptism of the Holy Spirit." It did not have the Pentecostal, glossolalia, stigma it has today. Seventh-day Adventist Christians must be very careful we do not give the world the wrong impression, by the terminology we use.

I firmly believe, if Ellen White were alive today, she would not use terminology intricately associated with Pentecostal spiritualism.

What I am saying is that certain words, because of their usage over the years, become buzz-words for certain groups and activities and when those buzz-words are used in certain contexts, it sends up a red flag.

For example: the word "rapture" -- a perfectly good word, but when used by the majority of Christians in connection with the second coming, it represents the unscriptural theory of the secret rapture. If I were to advertise for a seminar on the second coming, I would not use that word, because without being

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QUESTIONS FOR PROPHECY COUNTDOWNQuestion Number 1:

The Committee is not aware of any other independent evangelistic ministry that has a congregation directly affiliated with the ministry.

A. What benefits do you see in having a church company meet "on site"?

Answer:

Congregations affiliated with independent ministries:

1. Yucchi Pines
2. Wildwood
3. Laurel Brook
4. Groveland Health Center
5. Little Creek

And several others.

People come from all over the state, all over the country, and even all over the world, to hear the one they've seen on television. People come to hear the speaker of PROPHECY COUNTDOWN. We could have called this church the Prophecy Countdown Church, but we didn't think it sounded right. We knew this part of Florida is the only place you could justifiably use the term "rolling hills."

Prophecy Countdown and the Rolling Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church are intricately interlinked together. If you try to remove the Rolling Hills Church from Prophecy Countdown, the church will fizzle and die a quick death. The only reason there is a Rolling Hills church is because of Prophecy Countdown and the historical Seventh-day Adventist messages that are consistently given from its pulpit. Without it, Prophecy Countdown and these messages, would cease to exist. If you doubt me, try separating the two and see what happens.

Oh, by the way, Prophecy Countdown, Inc. owns the name "Rolling Hills" in the State of Florida.

Question Number 1b:

Is the Prophecy Countdown Board willing to see the Rolling Hills Company secure other facilities for worship?

Answer:

If that was for the best interest of those attending, yes. But why don't you come and take a vote from those attending, and see what they say? Wouldn't that be the honest thing to do?

Question Number 2:

In one of the tapes, John Osborne referred to Prophecy Countdown as "a private corporation."

- A. Who are the current members of Prophecy Countdown?
- B. What are the requirements to become a member of Prophecy Countdown?
- C. When was the last meeting of members held?
- D. Does Prophecy Countdown have a 501 (c) (3) status which qualifies contributions as deductible for IRS purposes. If so, please provide a copy.

Answer:

Our attorney advised us this is not necessarily public information. We are operating this corporation under strict legal requirements and guidelines as set up by the State of Florida with regard to members, requirements for memberships and, meetings of members. Anyone legitimately wanting to know specifics in this area is welcome to appear before a duly called Prophecy Countdown Board meeting stating their reason and desire, our corporate attorney will gladly and honestly address these issues.

Regarding the 501 (c)3 status: this is on file and will also be gladly shown to anyone who legitimately desires to see it when they come to the Prophecy Countdown office.

You will not find Prophecy Countdown, Inc. in violation in any of these areas.

Question Number 3:

The operation of Prophecy Countdown is carried on through contributions and gifts of supporters.

- A. Will you provide a copy of the last three years' financial statements of Prophecy Countdown?

FLORIDA CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
ACTION REGARDING ROLLING HILLS COMPANY STATUS AND PROPHECY COUNTDOWN
November 29, 1990

Background:

In 1987 John Osborne and the Prophecy Countdown organization moved from Bonita Springs to Lake County area. At that time Osborne requested that the Florida Conference Executive Committee approve the organization of the Rolling Hills Company, with Osborne to be appointed as lay leader. The company has not been under the supervision of any district pastor but directly responsible to the Conference Administration.

When the Company was organized, the company began meeting at the facilities of Prophecy Countdown in Rolling Hills. When Prophecy Countdown moved to its present facility near Mt. Dora, the company also moved its meeting place to the current PC facilities. Those facilities are approximately 3 miles from the Mt. Dora Church on Highway 441.

Since December 31, 1984 Osborne has not been employed by nor held any credentials or licenses from the Florida Conference or any other denominational entity.

While in Bonita Springs, Osborne was perceived to be critical and antagonistic to the Florida Conference and denominational organizations, however during the years 1988-89 he appeared to be moving toward a more cooperative spirit.

In June, 1990, the Florida Conference Executive Committee took action to remove Osborne as lay leader of the Rolling Hills Company. This action was taken because of the public position taken by John Osborne in opposition to constituted church authority and leadership, which included allegations that the Committee found to be inaccurate, misleading and deceptive. As such, the Conference Committee believes that he has "borne false witness" against individuals in positions of responsibility within the church. Conference Administration was given written notice that both Osborne and the Rolling Hills Company refused to accept the committee action.

The Florida Conference Executive Committee has reviewed the actions taken by the Rolling Hills Company in refusing to acknowledge the removal of John Osborne as lay leader of the company and the written responses to questions addressed to the group. Based upon this information, this committee believes that additional action is warranted at this time. This action is premised upon the following points:

1. Although we affirm the right and privilege of Seventh-day Adventists to meet together for the worship of God and fellowship, we believe that those who assemble using the name of the church (Seventh-day Adventist) portray to visitors and other members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that the congregational body is part of the organizational structure of the church. As such, any visitor should be able to expect that those members assembled will properly represent and be supportive of the church.
2. We affirm the right of individual members to disagree with church leadership and to voice that disagreement in the manner becoming a Christian. We believe that unity in the church and the body of Christ is an objective set before us in Scripture; but this objective does not destroy the individuality of the believer - there can be unity without uniformity.

Answer:

Yes, we do and have, to those who love and support us, but not to our enemies. In fact, we had a retired conference worker come in and look at our financial records quite recently.

- B. Have the accounting records of Prophecy Countdown been audited during the last three years?

Answer:

Yes. In fact, we have just been given a clean bill of health by the IRS. We also have a local accounting firm that does all our books on a monthly basis.

- C. Who is entitled to receive a copy of the financial statements of Prophecy Countdown?

Answer:

Our faithful supporters who come by in person and request to see same.

* * *

Items to Note:

1. John and Dianne Osborne have not opened the mail for over five years. They do not open or get involved in any manner with the funds that come into Prophecy Countdown.
2. John and Dianne Osborne do not even have a key to the bookkeeping office nor do they know the code to gain access to the computers.
3. All check-writing and disbursements are done by the Secretary/Treasurer of Prophecy Countdown, Patti Edwards. The Osbornes do not disburse funds from Prophecy Countdown.
4. Our receipts are all on a numbered system with checks and balances, done by two persons.
5. Receipts are issued on a monthly basis.
6. All business matters and expenditures are conducted by the Prophecy Countdown Board of Directors.

3. We believe that those who hold themselves out to be leaders in the church should not be divisive and thus destroy the benefits of a corporate witness. We believe that the methods and contents of the criticism against the church and its leadership by John Osborne goes beyond appropriate means and has tended to be divisive.
4. We recognize that many supporters of Prophecy Countdown appreciate the philosophy that is presented by John Osborne but may not concur with the methods used and the attitude that is portrayed. Nevertheless, any action that may affect Prophecy Countdown and John Osborne will possibly affect these members.
5. We believe that the continued approval of the Rolling Hills Company by this committee may be construed as an approval of the actions of John Osborne and of the body as a whole, and that such perceived approval may lead to the desire for the ultimate objective of full fledged church organization.
6. Based upon the written responses furnished to the committee as well as a review of published tapes and materials, we find:
 - a. That the Rolling Hills Company has rejected the provisions of the Church Manual giving authority to the Florida Conference Executive Committee to function as the governing body for the Conference and the board for the Rolling Hills Company which is a part of the "conference church".
 - b. That contrary to the Church Manual the Rolling Hills Company has asserted its right to elect officers and select its own "pastor" or lay leader; and have represented on widely distributed videotapes and publications that they are a Seventh-day Adventist Church with John Osborne as their pastor.
 - c. The responses of the Rolling Hills Company to questions submitted by the Florida Conference reaffirms that the members "unanimously" are unwilling to accept the authority of the Florida Conference and do not accept that final responsibility rests with the Conference Committee.

We, therefore, believe that the continued approval of the Rolling Hills Company is no longer appropriate or in the best interest of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and it is therefore with profound regret,

VOTED THAT THE ROLLING HILLS COMPANY IS DISBANDED, EFFECTIVE AS OF November 29, 1990.

In taking this action we recognize that this action may disappoint many faithful members and therefore clarify the action by making the following additional comments, recommendations and further action:

- a. We recommend that each member of the present company become an active member of another Seventh-day Adventist church or company as soon as possible to enjoy the fellowship of corporate worship.
- b. If there are members in the Lake County area that desire to form another company at another location more distant from the Mt Dora Church, and they are willing to become a part of a recognized district of the conference, with leadership to be furnished by Conference pastoral

staff, those individuals should make their desires known to the Conference administration for consideration.

- c. We recognize that there may be some members of the company who will continue to meet at the Prophecy Countdown facilities for Sabbath worship. To those, we ask that they respect the organizational structure of the church by not holding their group out to be a Seventh-day Adventist Church or Seventh-day Adventist Company or any other designation that would appear to give recognition of the group by the church organization. It is therefore

VOTED that authorization for the use of a sign designating the Prophecy Countdown facilities as a location for a "Seventh-day Adventist Church or Company" is withdrawn.

- d. The disbanding of the Rolling Hills Company, by its very nature, eliminates the position of any person as a "lay leader" of that group. Although John Osborne has been identifying himself as "John Osborne pastors the Rolling Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church", any implied prior approval of any nature of that language or similar language or description is hereby specifically WITHDRAWN, REVOKED AND TERMINATED. Accordingly, all such references on existing video tapes, printed material and otherwise should be deleted and any future productions and publications should not make this reference. We respectfully request that John Osborne and Prophecy Countdown immediately adhere to this action.
- e. This action is not as a result of the position that John Osborne has taken with regard to "celebration churches". We join in a concern that worship should be meaningful, reverent and evaluated in proper context. Our action is taken because we believe that Prophecy Countdown leadership has not exercised responsibility in fairly presenting facts and, in some cases, has clearly distorted facts; and, further, the attitude in which criticism has been made is not conducive to the growth and health of the church body.

This is to certify that this three-page document is an authentic copy of the Florida Conference Executive Committee Minutes of November 29, 1990.

Signed O. O. Graham
O. O. Graham, President

Signed Gloria Becker
Gloria Becker, Interim Secretary

December 19, 1990

To the Members of the Rolling Hills Company

Dear Fellow Believers:

I wanted to send along this little letter with a copy of the recent action taken by the Conference Executive Committee.

First of all, I would like to state that the action taken by the Committee in no way affects your membership in the Florida Conference Church. You are still members and brothers and sisters in the Florida Family of God. The action related to the Rolling Hills organization.

I believe the Conference Executive Committee took this action because it simply felt there was no way we could maintain a working relationship with an organization that was in open defiance against the corporate church and has chosen to function as an independent congregational organization, while calling itself a "Seventh-day Adventist church."

Seventh-day Adventist churches are churches that function in harmony with the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, which has been established through the democratic process at the General Conference Session.

We want you to know that we love each one of you as Christian brothers and sisters and as members of the Conference Church. We believe most of those attending the services held there at Prophecy Countdown are sincere, dedicated Seventh-day Adventists who love the Lord Jesus and His church.

Perhaps I should point out to you that if there are those who have transferred to Rolling Hills from other Seventh-day Adventist churches, believing that the Rolling Hills group is a Seventh-day Adventist church, and it has not been processed through the conference channels, they may have lost their membership in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. This is because Rolling Hills was originally organized as a Company, was disbanded as a Company, and never was a Seventh-day Adventist church within the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.

To the Members of the Rolling Hills Company
December 19, 1990
Page 2

Likewise if there are those who have been baptized into the group there believing it to be a church, and have not been processed through the conference channels, they also would not hold membership in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. We do not challenge the right of any group of people to organize an independent church, but we are concerned that each one of the members clearly understands that when joining the Rolling Hills group, they are not joining the Seventh-day Adventist denomination but are instead joining an independent congregation which has chosen to call itself "Rolling Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church."

Any members who have transferred to the Rolling Hills Company prior to June 24, 1990 have been duly processed into the Florida Conference. Those being baptized or transferring after that date are probably only members of the independent congregational organization.

Please pray that God will lead each one as we individually seek Him to know His will for our individual lives. I hope that each one of you will want to be a part of the world family of Seventh-day Adventists. Even though we all have faults and weaknesses, we believe God is leading us individually into such a fellowship with Him through His indwelling power and presence, that the day will soon come when Jesus can come and claim us as His own because we have so let Him live His beautiful life in us that it can be truly said we have become like Him.

Thank you for your understanding and prayers.

Yours sincerely,



O. O. Graham, President

mlc

Enc.

APPENDIX XXXVII

LETTER TO JOHN OSBORNE FROM GRAHAM AND HENDERSHOT



Florida Conference

of Seventh-day Adventists

September 16, 1991

John Osborne
41329 Silver Drive
Umatilla, FL 32784

Dear John:

This letter is to let you know that your name will be discussed on the Conference Committee September 29, 1991 for possible discipline. We have placed this item on the agenda based on the following ADCOM action:

VOTED to INVITE John Osborne to attend the September 29, 1991 Conference Committee, if he so desires, to show cause as to reasons he should not be disciplined on the basis of "persistent refusal to recognize properly constituted church authority or to submit to the order and discipline of the church".

John, it is with great regret that we feel the time has come to deal with this situation on our committee. Please be assured that our intention is to give you opportunity, if desired, to present your side of the above stated cause for discipline.

If you wish to address the committee, we will provide for that opportunity at 12:00 noon Sunday, September 29, 1991 at the Florida Hospital Pods. If we hear from you in the affirmative, we will plan for up to 30 minutes for your presentation. Otherwise, we will assume you choose not to attend.

Sincerely,

O. O. Graham, President

Lewis Hendershot
Vice President/Secretary

dlw

APPENDIX XXXVIII

FAX FROM OSBORNES REQUESTING MEMBERSHIP REMOVAL

pg2

PROPHECY COUNTDOWN

9047350875

09-20-91 10:40

Phone
1-800-HIS LOVE • (904) 735-1844
Mailing Address
P.O. Box 1844 • Grand Island, FL 32735
Street Address
1250 New Hwy. 441 S. • Mt. Dora, FL 32757

Prophecy Countdown, Inc.

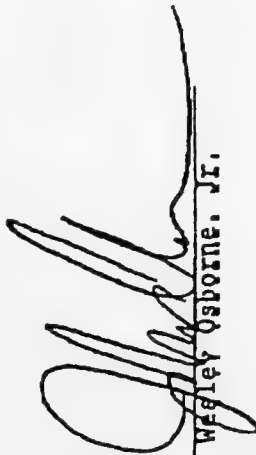
TO: Elder Obed Graham
Elder Lewis Hendershot
Florida Conference of SDA

FROM: Pastor John Osborne

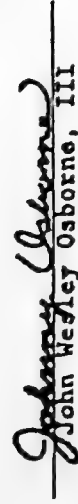
DATE: September 20, 1991

SUBJECT: Church Membership

Let this serve as notice that we wish our names to be removed from the Florida Conference Church of Seventh-day Adventists EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY.


John Wesley Osborne, Jr.


Dianne I. Osborne


John Wesley Osborne, III

Our names are up for first reading tomorrow in our new Seventh-day Adventist church house.

A television ministry supported by Seventh-day Adventist laymen - worldwide

P.O. Box 1313, Orlando, Florida 32802-1313 • 616 E. Rollins Street • Orlando, Florida 32803 • 407-898-7521



Florida Conference

of Seventh-day Adventists

TO: NAD Union Presidents

FROM: Florida Conference Administration

DATE: October 2, 1991

RE: John Osborne of Prophecy Countdown, Mt. Dora FL

Florida Conference Executive Committee
September 29, 1991

JOHN OSBORNE DISCIPLINE - In harmony with the Church Manual the Executive Committee voted to drop John Osborne from membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church for apostasy. The Conference received a FAX from John requesting that his family's names be dropped from the Conference church, stating that they were in the process of joining another SDA church.

- - - - -

If you wish other information regarding the recent operation of Prophecy Countdown, you may wish to contact Jack Wright, recently resigned Board chairman, (407) 862-8020.



Florida Conference



of Seventh-day Adventists

October 4, 1991

John Osborne
41329 Silver Drive
Umatilla, FL 32784

Dear John:

These are the minutes from the September 29, 1991 Florida Conference Executive Committee Meeting as they currently read:

"VOTED to DROP John Osborne from membership in the Seventh-day Adventist church for apostasy. It was noted that we received a facsimile from John, signed by John Osborne, Dianne Osborne, and Johnny Osborne, requesting that their names be dropped from the Florida Conference Church and stating that they were in the process of joining another Seventh-day Adventist Church".

"VOTED to ACCEPT the request of Dianne Osborne and Johnny Osborne to be dropped from the Florida Conference Church subject to verification by the conference officers that this is indeed their wish."

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gloria Becker".

Gloria Becker
Recording Secretary for the
Florida Conference Executive Committee

dlw

APPENDIX XXXIX

**MEMBERSHIP TRANSFER BY PROFESSION OF FAITH:
MONTANA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS
NORTH PACIFIC UNION CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS**

PHONE No. :

Sep. 01 1992 2:2

Document: Fax 1/17/92 10:31, Created: 1/17/92 10:47
 Fax #1
 PROPHECY COUNTDN
 01/17/92 02:31
 Fax #2

Phone
 1-800-HIS LOVE • (904) 735-1844
 Mailing Address
 P.O. Box 1844 • Grand Island, FL 32735
 Street Address
 1250 New Hwy. 441 S. • Mt. Dora, FL 32757

Prophecy Countdown, Inc.

January 17, 1992

Dr. Bob Woods
 891 Ponderosa Drive
 Angwin, CA 94508

Dear Dr. Woods:

Dianne, Johnny, and I would like to respectfully request that our names be taken into consideration for immediate membership in the Angwin Village Seventh-day Adventist Church -- on Profession of Faith.

We feel very keenly about the persecution that our membership has brought upon the Troy, Montana, Seventh-day Adventist Church, by our denominational leadership. Therefore we feel that perhaps at this time we should seek another Seventh-day Adventist Church home.

But be assured, if the Angwin Village Seventh-day Adventist Church takes us into membership, it would only be a matter of time before this same persecution is brought against you. If you dear folks are able to withstand the fierce ecclesiastical intimidation now being unleashed against our faithful Adventist people, we would be honored to be a part of your church family.

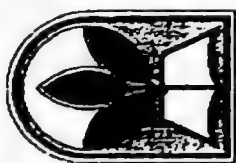
It is comforting to know that our prophet foresaw this time coming in the Adventist church.

"If the cords are drawn much tighter, if the rules are made much finer, if men continue to bind their fellow-laborers closer and closer to the commandments of men, MANY WILL BE STIRRED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD TO BREAK EVERY SHACKLE, AND ASSERT THEIR LIBERTY IN CHRIST JESUS" 3RH 275

That time is now brother. What an exciting time to live! Awaiting your reply.

John W. Osborne, Jr.
 Pastor John W. Osborne, Jr.
Dianne Osborne
 Dianne I. Osborne
Johnny Osborne
 Johnny Osborne, III
 A television ministry supported by Seventh-day Adventist laymen worldwide

Montana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists



Dedicated to Christian Growth

September 1, 1992

Robert Dale
 & General Conference, SDA
 13501 Old Columbia Pike
 Silver Spring, MD 20904-1608

RE: John Osborn Church Membership

Dear Elder Dale:

Without following the process outlined in the Church Manual, the Troy Seventh-day Adventist Church accepted John Osborn into membership by Profession of Faith on October 12, 1992.

January 26, 1992, John Osborn's name was removed from the Troy Seventh-day Adventist Church records by request of the church.

Sincerely,

John Rasmussen
 John Rasmussen
 Treasurer

142S West Main, Bozeman, Montana 59715-3257, Phone(406) 587-3101

Mr. Rady Houghttelling
Mr. Bill Johnson
Page 2
February 18, 1992

NORTHERN
CALIFORNIA
CONFERENCE
OF THE
SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST
CHURCH
P.O. Box 23165 • 401 Taylor Boulevard, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523-9979
Telephone 510/685-4300 • Fax 510/356-6779

2. The Pastor

Churches are assigned a pastor who is responsible to the conference for making certain that the Sabbath worship services are conducted in a manner that will glorify our God and that the sermons presented will reflect Adventist teachings. If I were to learn, for instance, that a Methodist preacher was preaching Methodist sermons regularly in one of our churches, I would contact the pastor and deal with him on this issue. The Village Church is taking that ability from me by setting the example that the pastor doesn't in fact choose the speakers, the elders do. Thus the Village Church, by its example, is once again providing the opportunity for a lowering of the standards in other churches. It is my understanding that the pastor is allowed to speak once a month in the Village Church. The correct procedure is that while the pastor may choose not to speak every Sabbath and may only choose to speak once a month, he is the one to make that decision and he is held responsible for who is chosen to speak. The elders may wish to make suggestions to the pastor about their concerns, but it is not their prerogative to "allow" or "disallow" him to speak; he chooses when to speak and when to invite other speakers.

3. Procedures

No one point of this section is to be the major issue. However, the violation of procedures of the Adventist Church does bring up the question of how to have unity in the churches.

- a. Profession of Faith: This sacred rite along with baptism is administered by a pastor, not a group of elders in the absence of the pastor.
- b. Dual Membership: When a member wishes to change his membership, he asks to have that membership transferred, and a church then votes on that transfer recommendation. When a person is voted in on profession of faith and is also a member of another congregation, he has membership in two churches which causes disorder and confusion.
- c. Church Business Meetings: The pastor should call these meetings. In particular, when there is a sensitive issue, it is not wise to call the meeting when it is a well-known fact that the pastor is to be gone for three days.
- d. Hasty Actions: Conference ministerial director, Duane Corwin, requested that the Village Church wait until the conference officers could be asked for their counsel. This was not done. (It is worthy of note that the Church Manual says that this is to be done anytime a person requests membership by profession of faith after he/she has been dropped by another congregation.)
- e. Lack of Proper Checking: The Florida Conference should have been contacted for information about the church discipline action. By your admission, that was not done.
- f. Local Membership: A congregation should seek to have its membership made up of people in the local area, and when people move away from the geographic area, members should transfer their membership to a church in the new location.

..//

February 18, 1992

Mr. Rady Houghttelling
P. O. Box 654
Angwin, CA 94508

Mr. Bill Johnson
P. O. Box 173
Angwin, CA 94508

Dear Rady and Bill:

Thank you for taking time with me at the Pastors-Elders-Deacons meeting last Sabbath so we could visit about the Angwin Village Church. I told you that I would try to summarize our conversation, or at least the part where I voiced some of my concerns. As you remember, I said that I am no authority on John Osborne and would not try to explain all things about him.

There were two areas of concern that we spent most of the time talking about, and then a third area of concern that we spent a little time on:

1. Church Discipline

There is no doubt in my mind that the Angwin Village Church's motives were good when it invited John Osborne into membership. I am not judging the motives at all, but the result of that action is very bad. Church unity is destroyed when one church disciplines a member and that person can immediately be brought into membership in another church across the country with no checking with the previous church. Thus, discipline may as well not be done. This is a terrible thing to have happen. While I am sure that others have been dropped and then quickly taken in by another congregation, this is an inappropriate procedure for any church for any member; however, when this happens with a public figure it takes on worldwide significance. I am very eager to see the standards of the church upheld, but the Village Church has virtually told the pastors—"You drop them and we'll take them in."

I know that the Village Church has no motive to destroy church discipline and, therefore, lower church standards, yet that is what has happened. Discipline is difficult. It often causes tension between members and the pastor and between members of one family and another.

Since church discipline is so traumatic for so many people, pastors are tempted to avoid doing it. I encourage pastors to uphold the standards and also to administer discipline. The Village Church has taken a bold step toward destroying the church's ability to uphold the standards. I am so sad when I realize the result of what the Village Church has done. Pastors now ask, why discipline—the Village Church has proven it will undo what another church has done.

How would the Village Church feel if it went through all the appropriate steps in the discipline of a member and then a week later discover that the P.U.C. Church had accepted that person into membership by profession of faith, without even consulting with the Village Church. The difficulty here is taking into membership a member who had been dropped without even checking with the organization that dropped him about why the action had been taken.

..//

NORTHERN
CALIFORNIA
CONFERENCE
OF THE
**SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST
CHURCH**

P.O. Box 23165 • 401 TAYLOR BOULEVARD, PLEASANT HILL, CA 94523-9979
TELEPHONE 510/685-4300 • FAX 510/356 6779

Mr. Rady Houghttelling
Mr. Bill Johnson
Page 3
February 18, 1992

While we were together, you brought up the idea that your church did this knowing it could mean that adverse action could be brought against the Village Church by the sisterhood of churches of the Northern California Conference.

My response was that I do not want that to happen, but I need your help. Right now it does look like the Village Church:

1. takes in people who have been dropped recently in other places without checking with the previous church;
2. dictates to the pastor when he can preach and when he cannot preach;
3. does not follow the church manual on procedural issues resulting in a lack of unity with the other churches.

Please help me to know how to deal with the above issues. We need to work together to advance the cause of God.

Sincerely,

Don C. Schneider
President

tac

c: Harold Rich

September 2, 1992

Elder Robert L. Dale
Vice President
North American Division
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, Maryland 20904-6600

Dear Bob:

This is to give you an update on the events relating to John Osborne and his membership in one of the churches here in Northern California.

January 16, 1992

A letter FAXed from Bob Trefz to Dr. Bob Woods in Angwin, California. The letter was addressed to Dr. and Mrs. Woods (who are some of the leaders of the Angwin Village Church), to Pastor Rich (the Conference appointed pastor), and to the members of the Angwin Village Church. The letter says that the General Conference "is determined to destroy John (Osborne). They have already been responsible for the destruction of John Marik's home and life."

An appeal follows to the Village Church to accept John, Dianne, and Johnny (Osborne) into membership on Profession of Faith.

January 16, 1992

Elder Harold Rich met with some of the church leadership explaining that he would need to be gone over the weekend. The pastor then arranged for the Conference ministerial director to come to a meeting with some of the church leadership on the following night. The pastor tried to discourage the elders from any action on the Osborne membership.

January 17, 1992

Dr. Woods received a FAX signed by John, Dianne, and Johnny Osborne requesting that they be taken into membership in the Angwin Village Church on Profession of Faith.

January 17, 1992

Duane Corwin, NCC ministerial director, met with the elders as they watched two hours of Osborne's video, *Twisted Tales Untangled*, and then made four requests of the elders:

- a. Don't do anything on this matter until the pastor returns. (The pastor was away for three days attending a wedding.)
- b. The elders should not call a business meeting. This should be left for the pastor to do.

Elder Robert L. Dale
page 2
September 2, 1992

- c. Don't take any action on the Osborne membership without consulting with the officers of Northern California Conference.
- d. Don't take Osborne into membership without talking to the Florida Conference about why they dropped him. A follow up letter was sent reviewing the recommendations.

The elders announced on Sabbath morning that there would be a business meeting that would meet after sundown that night.

At the business meeting (without the pastor present and without Conference representation) a vote was taken to accept the Osborne family into membership on Profession of Faith. The vote was 30—yes, 3—no.

Following these meetings, I have met with some of the leaders of the Angwin Village Church to discuss some of the problems with the actions that they have taken on this item, and to discuss other problems with the actions of the Angwin Village Church.

January 18, 1992

February 15, 1992

I met with Rudy Houghtelling and head elder Bill Johnson and listened as they said voting John Osborne into membership was an important matter of principle. They said the Florida Conference did him in but he is a man of God, called by God to do a special work, and they wanted to protect his membership. They wanted to get the action taken before the Montana Conference Executive Committee met on January 20. They said they were afraid that the Montana Conference would drop John, or discipline him, and then they would not be able to take him into membership; and they were also afraid that the Conference would drop John and then the General Conference would sue him for using the name Seventh-day Adventist.

They said they recognized that this might cost their church its membership in the sisterhood of churches but after thinking about that possibility, they still felt it was important to take the action.

My response to the discussion was:

1. Taking a person into membership who has been dropped from another church tears down the church's ability to have effective church discipline. This is especially true in the case of the Angwin Village Church which did not even check with the church in Florida from which John Osborne and his family were dropped.
2. We believe that the pastor of the church must be responsible for the selection of speakers in the church on Sabbath morning.
3. For a church to continue in the sisterhood of churches, it is imperative for the church to function according to the *Church Manual*.

Elder Robert L. Dale
page 3
September 2, 1992

February 18, 1992 Letters were sent to some of the church leaders to put in writing the key points of the discussion in the face to face meetings.

The discussion continues with the Conference and the leadership of the Angwin Village Church. Both the Conference Executive Committee and the Conference Lay Advisory Council have expressed themselves on this matter. The committees do not wish to take any quick actions. Both groups feel that continued appeals must be made, but both groups feel that churches must be able to work together if they are to remain in the sisterhood of churches.

Thank you for this opportunity to discuss this matter.

Sincerely,

Don Schneider

Don C. Schneider
President

tac

counsel from the pastor of the church, or, if he is not available, from the conference or field president before any action is taken by the church, when such a step is contemplated.

Reasons for Which Members Shall Be Disciplined

Among the grievous sins for which members shall be subject to church discipline are the following:

1. Denial of faith in the fundamentals of the gospel and in the cardinal doctrines of the church or teaching doctrines contrary to the same.
2. Violation of the law of God, such as worship of idols, murder, stealing, profanity, gambling, Sabbathbreaking, and willful and habitual falsehood.
3. Violation of the seventh commandment of the law of God as it relates to the marriage institution, the Christian home, and biblical standards of moral conduct.
4. Such violations as fornication, promiscuity, incest, homosexual practice and other perversions, and the remarriage of a divorced person, except of the "innocent party" in a divorce for adultery or for sexual perversions.
5. Fraud or willful misrepresentation in business.
6. Disorderly conduct which brings reproach upon the cause.
7. Adhering to or taking part in a divisive or disloyal movement or organization. (See p. 155, "Self-appointed Organizations.")
8. Persistent refusal to recognize properly constituted church authority or to submit to the order and discipline of the church.
9. The use, manufacture, or sale of alcoholic beverages.
10. The use of tobacco.
11. The misuse of, or trafficking in, narcotics or other drugs.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes the need of exercising great care to protect the highest spiritual interests of its members, to ensure fair treatment, and to safeguard the fair name of the church.

In some cases of transgression of the commandments of God where there is deep repentance and full and free confession, giving evidence that genuine conversion has taken place, the church may administer discipline by placing the transgressor under censure for a stated period of time.

In cases of flagrant violation of the law of God, which have brought public reproach upon the cause, the church may deem it necessary, even though a sincere confession has been made, to disfellowship the member to protect its fair name and its Christian standards. Later, when it is evident that the individual's life is consistent with church standards, the offender may be received back into the fold after rebaptism. The church cannot afford to deal lightly with such sins, nor permit personal considerations to affect its actions. It must register its decisive and emphatic disapproval of the sins of fornication, adultery, all acts of moral indiscretion, and other grievous sins;

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

161

at the same time it must do everything to restore and reclaim the erring ones. As the world continually grows more lax in moral matters, the church must not lower the standards set by God, but must take prompt and decisive action where moral lapses have occurred.

Caution in Disciplining Members

"Christ has plainly taught that those who persist in open sin must be separated from the church, but He has not committed to us the work of judging character and motive. He knows our nature too well to entrust this work to us. Should we try to uproot from the church those whom we suppose to be spurious Christians, we should be sure to make mistakes. Often we regard as hopeless subjects the very ones whom Christ is drawing to Himself. Were we to deal with these souls according to our imperfect judgment, it would perhaps extinguish their last hope. Many who think themselves Christians will at last be found wanting. Many will be in heaven who their neighbors supposed would never enter there. Man judges from appearance, but God judges the heart. The tares and the wheat are to grow together until the harvest; and the harvest is the end of probationary time.

"There is in the Saviour's words another lesson, a lesson of wonderful forbearance and tender love. As the tares have their roots closely intertwined with those of the good grain, so false brethren in the church may be closely linked with true disciples. The real character of these pretended believers is not fully manifested. Were they to be separated from the church, others might be caused to stumble, who but for this would have remained steadfast."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 71, 72.

Ministers or Churches Not to Establish Tests of Fellowship.—A minister, an individual church, or a conference does not have the authority to set up or establish tests of fellowship for the denomination. This authority rests with the entire church body, and is exercised through the regularly constituted organization of the church in the General Conference. Anyone seeking to apply tests other than those herein set forth does not, therefore, properly represent the church.

"God is leading out a people, not a few separate individuals here and there, one believing this thing, another that. Angels of God are doing the work committed to their trust. The third angel is leading out and purifying a people, and they should move with him unitedly. Some run ahead of the angels that are leading this people; but they have to retrace every step, and meekly follow no faster than the angels lead."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 207.

At a Duly Called Meeting.—Members may be disciplined by the church for sufficient cause, but only at a duly called business meeting of the church, provided the meeting is presided over by an ordained minister or a local ordained elder of the church concerned.

should at any time receive into membership a person who is under the censure of another church. Such a course condones the offense for which another church has applied discipline, and is not in keeping with the spirit of the golden rule. In such cases of readmission to membership, rebaptism should precede reinstatement.

Right of Appeal for Reinstatement.—In a case where the church officers refuse to consider the application for reinstatement from an expelled member, such an individual has a right to appeal to the church for a hearing. The church should not neglect or refuse to grant such a hearing. If it does, the individual has the right to appeal for a hearing to the executive committee of the conference in which the church is located. If, after a full and impartial hearing, the conference committee is satisfied that an injustice is being inflicted by the church, the committee may recommend the reinstatement of the expelled member. But if membership is still refused by that church, then the committee may recommend the individual to membership in some other church. On the other hand, if it finds good grounds for sustaining the church in refusing to reinstate the member, it will so record its decision.

APPENDIX XL

**STATEMENTS ON HYPNOTISM,
NEUROLINGUISTICS, AND CELEBRATION CHURCHES**



ANDREWS
UNIVERSITY

August 6, 1992

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Comments and inquiries have been received implying that hypnotism, neurolinguistics, and "celebration churches" are being taught and/or promoted at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary.

After checking with Seminary professors, we can positively affirm that nothing of the like has happened or is expected to happen.

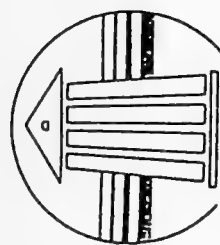
Sincerely,


Werner Vyhmeister
Dean

WV/bk

Theological Seminary

Berrien Springs, Michigan 49104-1500/(616) 471-3537



SOUTHERN COLLEGE
OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

May 7, 1990

Dear Parents, Friends, and Those Concerned:

On a campus of 1500 or more young people and faculty, there are many departments, multiple activities, and multiple responsibilities. However, the ultimate responsibility rests with the chief executive officer and the executive board under whom he serves.

Recently, I have received a number of concerned inquiries from parents and friends resulting from a circulated report of an activity that took place on the campus of Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists. The report, of course, is not an official college report and not totally factual or accurate in a number of respects. The activity, for example, was not related to the Southern Union Music Festival. Initially, it was an activity of a small musical group and its friends. There was a notice in the press and on the radio station for its attendance. Total attendance was limited to less than 200 people.

As president of the college, I wish to apologize to our concerned parents, friends, and college constituency for the aspects of the program which gave concern. Had I inquired more fully into the details of the program in its planning stages, I would have asked for some elements to be modified and some elements to be eliminated altogether. And I take responsibility for not having done that. I wish to assert that we have an extremely talented and experienced music faculty and a well led department that has made significant contributions to the musical life of this denomination and the training of hundreds of graduates over the years. Our musical organizations are in great demand - both here and overseas. And our orchestra will play a significant role in the General Conference Session this summer.

I would like to go on record as stating that certain elements of the circulated criticisms were true and accurate, but others were inaccurate, nonfactual and related in tones of injured conscience. One has to wonder whether the criticism was to enhance and strengthen the role of Southern College in these extremely difficult times as it was circulated without any prior consultation with any responsible person here on the campus. No contact was made with the college administration before circulating the document. It would have helped a great deal could we have corrected what was incorrect and make the report as reasonable as possible. If the lurid details of the program were so contrary to Christian standards; I ask, "Why should they be paraded before the readers seeking holiness of life?"

For administrators of Seventh-day Adventist institutions, there is always tension between the degree of responsibility and judgment allowed to students

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John S. Savage, D. Min.
PRESIDENT

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CONSULTANTS
INCORPORATED

March 10, 1992

Dear Lab II Graduate:

I hold in my hand a copy of a letter from John Osborne in Grand Island, Florida, that was sent to many Adventist pastors. I am deeply concerned that the letter indicates Mr. Osborne has twisted and distorted all information he has received about L.E.A.D. Consultants. Since Mr. Osborne has not been through any of our training, all information to him has come from other sources. I want to make clear the facts, as over against what is in Mr. Osborne's letter, and state the following:

I do not teach hypnosis nor any form of it. I am not trained to do so, so that even if I wanted to I could not.

Mr. Osborne is completely confused about the difference between Lab I and Lab II graduates and NLP participants. Lab I does not teach, in any form or in any manner, any type of hypnosis. As you know, Lab I and Lab II teach in-depth listening skills. It does not teach "MASS HYPNOSIS."

SDA Lab II graduates have not been trained by L.E.A.D. Consultants in any form of hypnosis since that is not a part of the training of Lab I or Lab II. Anyone who believes that has been totally misinformed. The manuals used in Lab I and Lab II Calling and Caring Ministries do not contain the word "hypnosis" and do not contain any information or materials about it.

As most of you know, I do not do the training for NLP certification. This is done by another staff member, who has had over 2,000 hours of training in advanced NLP strategies. Our staff member is the only person in America who teaches NLP from a purely Christian perspective. No person who has ever gone through L.E.A.D.'s NLP training would ever say that they have been taught mass hypnosis techniques. Our NLP training does not teach any form of mass hypnosis techniques.

Leadership, Education, And Development
P.O. Box 664 Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068

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and faculty alike on one hand and the determined enforcement of regulations on the other hand. A mistake in judgment has been made, and I extend to each of you a sincere apology. I will take time in the future to screen programs more thoroughly and make sure they meet the standards we all believe in and want to achieve.

In many places around the world Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists is regarded by dedicated church leaders and thousands of Christian parents as one of the finest and one of the most loyal of all Seventh-day Adventist institutions of higher learning in respect to both belief and practice. This does not suggest that we have arrived or that we do not have much to learn. There is no one on this campus who believes in witchcraft or practices sorcery or believes in the same. Perhaps it would not be inappropriate to ask those, who in the future, who may have concerns about things they might hear or witness to be willing to withhold judgment regarding them until providing the institution time and opportunity to respond regarding them. When one posing as a reporter sends out a report in the language of judgment day and openly advises parents against permitting their children to attend a particular Seventh-day Adventist institution which like all others is struggling to survive the difficulties of our times, and an institution that is continuing to fight the good fight of faith, one has to wonder about the premises and the motivations that would give birth to such counsel. Ellen White has called us to build up one another in this faith, not spend our time tearing each other down publicizing and enlarging and exaggerating the mistakes of others.

We are sincere in soliciting your prayers, your understanding, your counsel, and your support. We, here at Southern College, cherish a high view of Seventh-day Adventist Christian education. If this were not so, we would not be sending out 25 to 30 student missionaries per year. Our young people would not be involved in summer field schools of evangelism. They would not be involved in going to Honduras during their spring break to build a church or a school. They would not be involved in taking their Thanksgiving holiday on a New York trip where they feed the hungry. We would not have more than 20 outreach ministries going continuously through the year. You would not see seven to eight hundred young people on a Friday night participating in communion service and testimonies. There is much good happening here at Southern College!

Again, I apologize for the mistake that has been made. It is our prayer that you will find forgiveness in your hearts and at the same time lend your loyal support to a fine group of young people and dedicated faculty who are working together to bring God's work to a close here on earth.

Sincerely yours,

Donald R. Sahly
Donald R. Sahly
President

Page 2

March 10, 1992

LAB I AND LAB II

Our Neuro-Linguistic workshops provide pastors and lay people tools for healing and for facilitating deep spiritual work with others.

According to our list of those who have graduated in certification of NLP which requires 120 hours of training and is very different than Lab I and Lab II of Calling and Caring Ministries, we have only 3 that are SDA. Two of those are lay persons with the other being a pastor who is not serving in a local church.

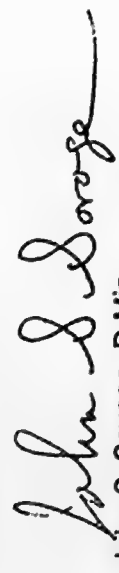
Calling and Caring Ministries Lab I and II are distinctly different training events than the four weeks of training in Neuro-Linguistics. Mr. Osborne has them totally confused. It would be like saying that a Chevy car is a Chrysler. Mr. Osborne's perceptions are extremely inaccurate and anyone who believes him is believing a lie. We are not connected in any way or form to the New Age movement nor do we teach any of its precepts.

Many of you have written to me regarding this problem. I thought by sending this letter to you that you could hand it to concerned persons in your church to give them factual information.

I appreciate the concern shown by so many of you. The Calling and Caring Ministries program continues to be developed successfully as our Lab II graduates trained 20% more people this year than last year. **It is my hope that this confusion will be resolved and that our work will be known for the Caring Skills it provides.**

Our commitment to Jesus Christ is clear. We of L.E.A.D. Consultants provide the most excellent training available for lay persons across the Christian spectrum.

Sincerely,


John S. Savage, D.Min.

P.S. Enclosed is a brief paper sent to Seventh-Day Adventists in Australia. It was written by Dr. Alwyn Salom, Personal Ministries Director, South Pacific Division of SDA's. These pages are reproduced and sent with his permission.

Introduction

The Lab I and Lab II training seminars are, as their sub-title correctly describes, "Calling and Caring Ministries" to missing members. They are designed to train pastors and selected laypersons in visitation skills to be used to minister to inactive and former members.

In the TAUC and the TTUC in the last 50 years (1941-90) the church has found it necessary to remove from church rolls a total of 27,250 names. In the last decade (1981-90) we have removed 9,234 names (equivalent to 16% of the current membership in those two Unions). These statistics do not include the many more whose names are still on church rolls but who rarely or never attend. This is a large field of ministry which demands more intentional care than we have given in the past. Lab I and Lab II are intended to help fill the gap.

Lab I is designed to assist people in the visitation of inactive and former members. It consists of information concerning members who drop out of church life, our personal attitudes to such people, and practical visitation skills in ministering to them (See Appendix for Outline). Lab II is identical in content, but it is to prepare those who will run Lab I in their local church to train church visitors. Thus it is also concerned with the organization and administration of Lab I, teaching methods for the training process, and practice in presenting Lab I.

Biblical Base for Lab I and Lab II

Lab I and Lab II are built on the foundation of Jesus' teaching which is seen particularly in the three parables: The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin and The Lost Son (Luke 15). In the parable of The Lost Sheep, the shepherd goes, searches for, finds, and restores the sheep which had wandered from the fold (church). Matthew's account of this parable closes with the words: "In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost" (Matt 18:14 NIV).

"If the lost sheep is not brought back to the fold, it wanders until it perishes. And many souls go down to ruin for want of a hand stretched out to save" (COL 191).

The parable of The Vineyard (Lk 13:6-9) presents a similar message of the need to minister to the fig tree which seems to be unfruitful. The call to restore gently those who have fallen is given by Paul (Gal 6:1) and this includes those who have fallen away from the church. The word translated "restore" is used elsewhere in the fishing context (Matt 4:21) of the repairing/mending of nets. So the restoration of former church members may be likened to a gentle repairing of their lives.

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Personal Ministries Director, South Pacific Division of SDA's.
(L.E.A.D. Consultants, Inc.)

The need to identify with the pain of such people is emphasized by Ellen White: "In your association with others, put yourself in their place. Enter into their feelings, their difficulties, their disappointments, their joys, and their sorrows. Identify yourself with them, and then do to them as, were you to exchange places with them, you would wish them to deal with you." (ME 143, 1928 ed.)

The Use of Lab I and Lab II by the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Lab I and Lab II have been used extensively by the Adventist Church in the North American Division over the last decade to assist in the recovery of inactive and former church members. Dr. John Savage, the creator of Lab I and Lab II acted as a consultant to the Columbia Union Conference from 1981-85 in training pastors and lay people in the ministry of working for former members. As a result of the visitation training in the Columbia Union, churches registered return rates ranging from 10% to 53% of those who were visited.

Dr. Savage is continuing (1990-91) to train Adventist pastors in the Potomac, Allegheny West and Central California Conferences.

The following denominational documentation should be noted:

J.R.Spangler, "Reactivating the Inactive Member" [Interview with Dr.Savage] Ministry, May 1983.

Monte Sahlin, "Where Have All the Members Gone?" Ministry February 1990.

Fordyce Detamore, Seeking His Lost Sheep [North American Division Church Ministries Series Edition], pp. 88,95.

False Charges Concerning Lab I and Lab II

There are currently being circulated false charges concerning Lab I and Lab II originating with such independent bodies as "Our Firm Foundation" "Amazing Truth", and "Pilgrim's Rest", etc. These documents contain deceptive and false statements which must be categorically denied.

It is categorically denied that Lab I or Lab II contain any teachings or practices, explicit or inferred, which support hypnotism or the New Age.

What these documents have done is to state information concerning NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) that relates to the following NLP Workshops: Introductory Workshop Level 1; Intermediate Workshop Level 2; Advanced Workshop Level 3; and Certification Workshop Level 4.

These workshops and their contents have nothing to do with Labs I and II. They are quite separate from Lab I and Lab II and there is no permission from Lab I or Lab II to these workshops. The only area of

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common ground is the use of the categories of people as "auditory", "visual" or "kinesthetic" because of the importance to them of what is said/heard or seen or felt (This is analogous to other categories used to describe people, e.g. "right-brained", "left-brained", "cholerick", "sanguine", "phlegmatic", etc.).

As Adventists we could not support the basic premises or training of the NLP Workshops referred to above. The only connection between Lab I and Lab II and the NLP Workshops is that they are two quite separate programs presented by the same organization (LEAD Consultants). However, the NLP trainer (Dr. Gene Rooney) has no connection with instruction in Lab I or Lab II.

The material being circulated currently by the independent bodies mentioned above refers to the NLP Workshops and not to Lab I or Lab II and thus is irrelevant.

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OUTLINE OF LAB I

Information

1. Research on the inactive church member
2. The "Drop-out Track"--the way church members leave the church
3. Theological and Biblical base for calling on inactive church members
4. Evaluating early signs of possible drop-out from the church
5. How to communicate with inactive members
6. Ways of developing a calling program in the local church

Personal Attitudes to Inactives/Former Members

1. Developing self-confidence in visiting inactives/former members
2. How to handle strong negative feelings from inactives/former members
3. Convictions concerning, and commitment to, ministry of calling

Visitation Skills with Inactives/Former members

1. Listening and communication skills (behaviour description/creative questions/direct expression of feelings/fogging/identification of auditory, visual or kinesthetic persons/listening to life commandments/listening to the life story/negative enquiry/paraphrase/perception check)
2. Making the initial telephone contact with inactives/former members
3. Conducting visits with inactives/former member members
4. Renegotiating entry back into the church
5. Helping inactives/former members come to decision to return
6. Bringing closure in the visit
7. Practice with church visiting team and support group for team

January 21, 1992

Elder Glenn Cavanaugh
c/o Florida Conference
P.O. Box 1313
Orlando, FL 32802

Dear Glenn:

This is to confirm our conversation of this morning regarding John Osborne's charges. I wish to state unequivocally to you that the Institute does not teach hypnosis in any way, shape or form, nor does it use N.L.P. training. In the past we have taught Lab I, which deals with reaching the inactive member. The seminar as we taught it had nothing to do with hypnosis whatsoever. In fact, we do not have currently, and have not in the last year and a half had any person on our staff who is qualified to teach Lab I.

In addition, we do not teach our students to start celebration churches as delineated by John Osborne's nine points of a celebration church. I would also hasten to say that John Osborne has never checked with us to discover whether or not we teach these things, and all such statements by him are gross misstatements and false.

I hope this clarifies the issue.

Sincerely yours,

Russell Burrill
Director

RB:gc

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Atlantic Union College P. O. Box 1000 So. Lancaster, MA 01561-1000 Tel. 508-368-2000
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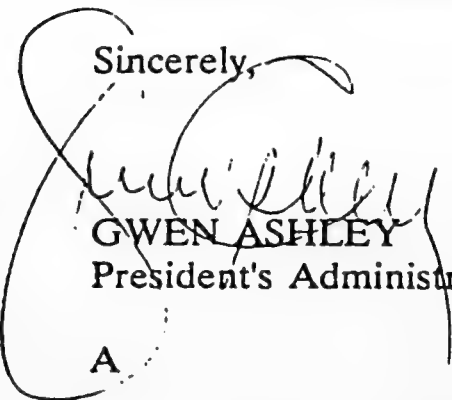
November 21, 1991

Elder Glenn Cavanaugh
Florida Conference
PO Box 1313
Orlando, FL 32802

Dear Elder Cavanaugh:

It has come to our attention that Atlantic Union College's bookstore supposedly stocks a book entitled, "How To Become A Master Student" and that supposedly we are teaching a course using this text. Please be advised that we do not now nor have we ever stocked the aforementioned book nor are we now or have we ever taught a course using this text. Thank you for bringing this letter of clarification to the attention of any appropriate party.

Sincerely,



GWEN ASHLEY

President's Administrative Assistant

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LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY

Office of the President

*Loma Linda, California 92350
(714) 824-4540
FAX: (714) 824-4577*

January 28, 1992

Elder Glenn Cavanaugh
Florida Conference of SDA
Box 1313
Orlando, FL 32802

Dear Elder Cavanaugh:

Thank you for calling about what you have heard regarding the required use of Becoming a Master Student in classes at Loma Linda University.

As I indicated to you, after consulting with the various schools of the University and with our bookstore, I have learned that this book is not sold by our bookstore and is not required reading for any classes at Loma Linda University. Unfortunately, it appears that you have been given misinformation. We do appreciate your taking the time to call us for the correct information.

Sincerely,

Myrna L. Schlenker
Executive Assistant to the President

mls

APPENDIX XLI

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES—1872

DECLARATION
OF THE
FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES
TAUGHT AND PRACTICED
BY
THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

"Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." Ephesians 3:20

STEAM PRESS
OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST PUBLISHING
ASSOCIATION, BATTLE CREEK, MICH.: 1872.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

In presenting to the public this synopsis of our faith, we wish to have it distinctly understood that we have no articles of faith, creed, or discipline, aside from the Bible. We do not put forth this as having any authority with our people, nor is it designed to secure uniformity among them, as a system of faith, but is a brief statement of what is, and has been, with great unanimity, held by them. We often find it necessary to meet inquiries on this subject, and sometimes to correct false statements circulated against us, and to remove erroneous impressions which have obtained with those who have not had an opportunity to become acquainted with our faith and practice. Our only object is to meet this necessity.

As Seventh-day Adventists we desire simply that our position shall be understood; and we are the more solicitous for this because there are many who call themselves Adventists who hold views with which we can have no sympathy, some of which, we think, are subversive of the plainest and most important principles set forth in the word of God.

As compared with other Adventists, Seventh-day Adventists differ from one class in believing in the unconscious state of the dead, and the final destruction of the unrepentant wicked; from another, in believing in the perpetuity of the law of God as summarily contained in the ten commandments, in the operation of the Holy Spirit in the church, and in setting no times for the advent to occur; from all, in the observance of the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath of the Lord, and in many applications of the prophetic scriptures.

With these remarks, we ask the attention of the reader to the following propositions, which aim to be a concise statement of the more prominent features of our faith.

—I—

That there is one God, a personal, spiritual being, the creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal, infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy; unchangeable, and everywhere present by his representative, the Holy Spirit. Ps. 139:7.

—II—

That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the one by whom God created all things, and by whom they do consist; that he took on him the nature of the seed of Abraham for the redemption of our fallen race; that he dwelt among men full of grace and truth, lived our example, died our sacrifice, was raised for our justification, ascended on high to be our only mediator in the sanctuary in Heaven, where, with his own blood he makes atonement for our sins; which atonement so far from being made on the cross, which was but the offering of the sacrifice, is the very last portion of his work as priest, according to the example of the Levitical priesthood, which foreshadowed and prefigured the ministry of our Lord in Heaven. See Lev. 16; Heb. 8:4, 5; 9:6, 7; etc.

—III—

That the Holy Scriptures, of the Old and New Testaments, were given by inspiration of God, contain a full revelation of his will to man, and are the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

—IV—

That Baptism is an ordinance of the Christian church, to follow faith and repentance, an ordinance by which we commemorate the resurrection of Christ, as by this act we show our faith in his burial and resurrection, and through that, of the resurrection of all the saints at the last day; and that no other mode fitly represents these facts than that which the Scriptures prescribe, namely, immersion. Rom. 6:8-5; Col. 2:12.

—V—

That the new birth comprises the entire change necessary to fit us for the kingdom of God, and consists of two parts: first, a moral change, wrought by conversion and a Christian life; second, a physical change at the second coming of Christ, whereby, if dead, we are raised incorruptible, and if living, are changed to immortality in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. John 8:8, 5; Luke 20:80.

—VI—

We believe that prophecy is a part of God's revelation to man; that it is included in that scripture which is profitable for instruction, 2 Tim. 8:16; that it is designed for us and our children, Deut. 29:29; that so far from being enshrouded in impenetrable mystery, it is that which especially

constitutes the word of God a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, Ps. 119:105, 2 Pet. 2:19; that a blessing is pronounced upon those who study it, Rev. 1:1-8; and that, consequently, it is to be understood by the people of God sufficiently to show them their position in the world's history, and the special duties required at their hands.

—VII—

That the world's history from specified dates in the past, the rise and fall of empires, and chronological succession of events down to the setting up of God's everlasting kingdom, are outlined in numerous great chains of prophecy; and that these prophecies are now all fulfilled except the closing scenes.

—VIII—

That the doctrine of the world's conversion and temporal millennium is a fable of these last days, calculated to lull men into a state of carnal security, and cause them to be overtaken by the great day of the Lord as by a thief in the night; that the second coming of Christ is to precede, not follow, the millennium; for until the Lord appears the papal power, with all its abominations, is to continue, the wheat and tares grow together, and evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, as the word of God declares.

—IX—

That the mistake of Adventist sin 1844 pertained to the nature of the event then to transpire, not to the time; that no prophetic period is given to reach to the second advent, but that the longest one, the two thousand and three hundred days of Dan. 8:14, terminated in that year, and brought us to an even called the cleansing of the sanctuary.

—X—

That the sanctuary of the new covenant is the tabernacle of God in Heaven, of which Paul speaks in Hebrews 8, and onward, of which our Lord, as great High Priest, is minister; that this sanctuary is the antitype of the Mosaic tabernacle, and that the priestly work of our Lord, connected therewith, is the antitype of the work of the Jewish priests of the former dispensation. Heb. 8:1-5, etc.; that this is the sanctuary to be cleansed at the end of the 2300 days, what is termed its cleansing being in this case, as in the type, simply the entrance of the high priest into the most holy place, to finish the round of service connected therewith, by blotting

out and removing from the sanctuary the sins which had been transferred to it by means of the ministration in the first apartment, Heb. 9:22, 28; and that this work, in the antitype, commencing in 1844, occupies a brief but indefinite space, at the conclusion of which the work of mercy for the world is finished.

—XI—

That God's moral requirements are the same upon all men in all dispensations; that these are summarily contained in the commandments spoken by Jehovah from Sinai, on engraven on the tables of stone, and deposited in the ark, which was in consequence called the "ark of the covenant," or testament. Num. 10:33, Heb. 9:4, etc.; that this law is immutable and perpetual, being a transcript of the tables deposited in the ark in the true sanctuary on high, which is also, for the same reason, called the ark of God's testament; for under the sounding of the seventh trumpet we are told that "the temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." Rev. 11:19.

—XII—

That the fourth commandment of this law requires that we devote the seventh day of each week, commonly called Saturday, to abstinence from our own labor, and to the performance of sacred and religious duties; that this is the only weekly Sabbath known to the Bible, being the day that was set apart before paradise was lost, Gen. 2:2, 3, and which will be observed in paradise restored, Isa. 66:22, 23; that the facts upon which the Sabbath institution is based confine it to the seventh day, as they are not true of any other day; and that the terms, Jewish Sabbath and Christian Sabbath, as applied to the weekly rest day, are names of human invention, unscriptural in fact, and false in meaning.

—XIII—

That as the man of sin, the papacy, has thought to change times and laws (the laws of God), Dan 7:25, and has misled almost all Christendom in regard to the fourth commandment, we find a prophecy of a reform in this respect to be wrought among believers just before the coming of Christ. Isa. 56:1, 2, 1 Pet. 1:5, Rev. 14:12, etc.

—XIV—

That as the natural or carnal heart is at enmity with God and his law, this enmity can be subdued only by a radical transformation of the affections, the exchange of unholy for holy principles; that this transformation follows repentance and faith, is the special work of the Holy Spirit, and constitutes regeneration or conversion.

—XV—

That as all have violated the law of God, and cannot of themselves render obedience to his just requirements, we are dependent on Christ, first for justification from our past offenses, and, secondly, for grace whereby to render acceptable obedience to his holy law in time to come.

—XVI—

That the Spirit of God was promised to manifest itself in the church through certain gifts, enumerated especially in 1 Cor. 12 and Eph. 4; that these gifts are not designed to supersede, or take the place of, the Bible, which is sufficient to make us wise unto salvation, any more than the Bible can take the place of the Holy Spirit; that in specifying the various channels of its operation, that Spirit has simply made provision for its own existence and presence with the people of God to the end of time, to lead to an understanding of that word which it had inspired, to convince of sin, and work a transformation in the heart and life; and that those who deny to the Spirit its place and operation, do plainly deny that part of the Bible which assigns to it this work and position.

—XVII—

That God, in accordance with his uniform dealings with the race, sends forth a proclamation of the approach of the second advents of Christ; that this work is symbolized by the three messages of Rev. 14, the last one bringing to view the work of reform on the law of God, that his people may acquire a complete readiness for that event.

—XVIII—

That the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary (see proposition X), synchronizing with the time of the proclamation of the third message, is a time of investigative judgment, first with reference to the dead, and at the close of probation with reference to the living, to determine who of the myriads now sleeping in the dust of the earth are worthy of a part in the first resurrection, and who of its living

multitudes are worthy of translation—points which must be determined before the Lord appears.

—XIX—

That the grave, whither we all tend, expressed by the Hebrew *sheol*, and the Greek *hades*, is a place of darkness in which there is no work, device, wisdom, or knowledge. Eccl. 9:10.

—XX—

That the state to which we are reduced by death is one of silence, inactivity, and entire unconsciousness. Ps. 146:4; Eccl. 9:5, 6; Dan. 12:2, etc.

—XXI—

That out of this prison house of the grace mankind are to be brought by a bodily resurrection; the righteous having part in the first resurrection, which takes place at the second advent of Christ, the wicked in the second resurrection, which takes place a thousand years thereafter. Rev. 20:4-6.

—XXII—

That at the last trump, the living righteous are to be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and with the resurrected righteous are to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, so forever to be with the Lord.

—XXIII—

That these immortalized ones are then taken to Heaven, to the New Jerusalem, the Father's house in which there are many mansions, John 14:1-3, where they reign with Christ a thousand years, judging the world and fallen angels, that is, apportioning the punishment to be executed upon them at the close of the one thousand years; Rev. 20:4; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; that during this time the earth lies in a desolate and chaotic condition, Jer. 4:20-27, described, as in the beginning by the Greek term *abussos* bottomless pit (Septuagint of Gen. 1:2); and that here Satan is confined during the thousand years, Rev. 20:1, 2, and here finally destroyed, Rev. 20:10; Mal. 4:1; the theater of the ruin he has wrought in the universe, being appropriately made for a time his gloomy prison house, and then the place of his final execution.

—XXIV—

That at the end of the thousand years, the Lord descends with his people and the New Jerusalem, Rev. 21:2, the wicked dead are raised

and come up upon the surface of the yet unrenewed earth, and gather about the city, the camp of the saints, Rev. 20:9, and fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them. They are then consumed root and branch, Mal. 4:1, becoming as though they had not been. Obed. 15, 16. In this everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, 2 Thess. 1:9, the wicked meet the everlasting punishment threatened against them, Matt. 25:46. This is the perdition of ungodly men, the fire which consumes them being the fire for which "the heavens and the earth which are now" are kept in store, which shall melt even the elements with its intensity, and purge the earth from the deepest stains of the curse of sin. 2 Pet. 8:7-12.

—XXV—

That a new heavens and earth shall spring by the power of God from the ashes of the old, to be, with the New Jerusalem for its metropolis and capital, the eternal inheritance of the saints, the place where the righteous shall evermore dwell. 2 Pet. 8:18; Ps. 87:11, 29; Matt. 5:5.

APPENDIX XLII

FUNDAMENTALISM

¹ **FUNDAMENTALISM.** The ultraconservative wing of Protestantism, especially as represented by denominations that rejected, or rose in opposition to, the movement known as Modernism. The name is derived from a series of books entitled *The Fundamentals*, which were published in the United States, beginning in 1909, with the aid of two wealthy laymen by the Testimony Publishing Company, and reprinted in 1917 by the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. Fundamentalism itself, however, actually antedates this series of books. It is characterized by belief in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, miracles, a supernatural creation, the virgin birth, a substitutionary atonement, the bodily resurrection, and the literal second advent of Christ. To Fundamentalists, the Bible is literally true, and historically and theologically inerrant in its original autographs. Man is a sinner who can be "saved" by a transforming new birth, after which he must live a life of sobriety and righteousness characterized by modest dress, wholesome entertainment, abstinence from alcoholic beverages and (often) tobacco, and by regular prayer, Bible study, and militant missionary work. Mass evangelism, radio preaching, and missions among non-Christian peoples are strongly emphasized by groups advocating this school of thought.

In the United States, Fundamentalism is strongest in the South and among rural people. Fundamentalists founded numerous Bible institutes that have become Bible colleges. A method of Biblical interpretation, known as dispensationalism (see Premillennialism), has had considerable popularity. The Holiness churches are all to be found here. The National Association of Evangelicals and the International Council of Christian Churches both include in their ranks Fundamentalist groups of different hues. Fundamentalists have also had considerable influence in British university circles.

Theologically, SDA's have a number of points in common with Fundamentalists, but for various reasons have never become identified with the movement. Generally speaking, Fundamentalists refuse to recognize SDA's as orthodox Christians, chiefly because of SDA teachings with respect to the law and the Sabbath, the state of the dead and the fate of the wicked, the 2300 days of Dan 8:14 and the investigative judgment, and the Spirit of Prophecy. On their part, SDA's reject as un-Biblical a number of teachings held by many (though not all) Fundamentalists, such as *antinomianism and dispensationalism, the natural immortality of the soul, the secret *rapture, the restoration of the Jews as God's chosen people, and a temporal millennium. These theological differences have made cooperation between SDA's and Fundamentalists, in areas of mutual concern such as creation versus evolution, difficult if not impossible, chiefly because of Fundamentalist unwillingness. To a considerable extent, Fundamentalists have ignored or rejected the valid findings of Biblical scholarship, a feature of the movement deplored by its more well-informed leaders. Furthermore, there seems to be a predisposition, especially among the more radical Fundamentalist groups, to take an obscurantist, irrational attitude on various matters. Perhaps the most influential voice of Fundamentalism in the United States is the evangelistic paper *The Sword of the Lord*, published in Wheaton, Illinois.

Since about 1940 a group of Fundamentalist scholars has arisen calling for a more enlightened attitude toward modern culture, especially in the areas of science and sound Biblical scholarship. Those sympathetic to this trend call themselves Evangelicals. In a general way, the National Association of Evangelicals, the Evangelical Theological Society, and the American Scientific Affiliation represent this point of view, as does also the bimonthly journal *Christianity Today*, published in Washington, D.C., as a fortnightly magazine of evangelical conviction.

¹Taken from *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, Commentary Reference Series, Revised Edition, Vol. 10 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1976), pp. 488, 489.

APPENDIX XLIII

FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS—1931

THE S.D.A. YEARBOOK, 1931

FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Seventh-day Adventists hold certain fundamental beliefs, the principal features of which, together with a portion of the scriptural references upon which they are based, may be summarized as follows:

1. That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, contain an all-sufficient revelation of His will to men, and are the only unerring rule of faith and practices. 2 Tim. 3:15-17.

2. That the Godhead, or Trinity, consists of the Eternal Father, a personal, spiritual Being, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, infinite in wisdom and love; the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, through whom all things were created and through whom the salvation of the redeemed hosts will be accomplished; the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, the great regenerating power in the work of redemption. Matt. 28:19.

3. That Jesus Christ is very God, being of the same nature and essence as the Eternal Father. While retaining His divine nature He took upon Himself the nature of the human family, lived on the earth as a man, exemplified in His life as our Example the principles of righteousness, attested His relationship to God by many mighty miracles, died for our sins on the cross, was raised from the dead, and ascended to the Father, where He ever lives to make intercession for us. John 1:1, 14; Heb. 2:9-18; 8:1, 2; 4:14-16; 7:25.

4. That every person in order to obtain salvation must experience the new birth; that this comprises an entire transformation of life and character by the recreative power of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. John 3:16; Matt. 18:3; Acts 2:37-39.

5. That baptism is an ordinance of the Christian church and should follow repentance and forgiveness of sins. By its observance faith is shown in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. That the proper form of baptism is by immersion. Rom. 6:1-6; Acts 16:30-33.

6. That the will of God as it relates to moral conduct is comprehended in His law of ten commandments; that these are great moral, unchangeable precepts, binding upon all men, in every age. Ex. 20:1-17.

7. That the fourth commandment of this unchangeable law requires the observance of the seventh day Sabbath. This holy institution is at the same time a memorial of creation and a sign of sanctification, a sign of the believer's rest from his own works of sin, and his entrance into the rest of soul which Jesus promises to those who come to Him. Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11; 31:12-17; Heb. 4:1-10.

8. That the law of ten commandments points out sin, the penalty of which is death. The law can not save the transgressor from his sin, nor impart power to keep him from sinning. In infinite love and mercy, God provides a way whereby this may be done. He furnishes a substitute, even Christ the Righteous One, to die in man's stead, making "Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Cor. 5:21. That one is justified, not by obedience to the law, but by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. By accepting Christ, man is reconciled to God, justified by His blood for the sins of the past, and saved from the power of sin by his indwelling life. Thus the gospel becomes "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." This experience is wrought by the divine agency of the Holy Spirit, who convicts of sin and leads to the Sin-Bearer, inducting the believer into the new covenant relationship, where the law of God is written on his heart, and through the enabling power of the indwelling Christ, his life is brought into conformity to the divine precepts. The honor and merit of this wonderful transformation belong wholly to Christ. 1 John 3:4; Rom. 7:7; Rom. 3:20; Eph. 2:8-10; 1 John 2:1, 2; Rom. 5:8-10; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17; Heb. 8:8-12.

9. That God only hath immortality. Mortal man possess a nature inherently sinful and dying. Immortality and eternal life come only through the gospel, and are bestowed as the free gift of God at the second advent of Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Tim. 6:15, 16; 1 Cor. 15:51-55.

10. That the condition of man in death is one of unconsciousness. That all men, good and evil alike, remain in the grave from death to the

resurrection. Eccl. 9:5, 6; Ps. 146:3, 4; John 5:28, 29.

11. That there shall be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust. The resurrection of the just will take place at the second coming of Christ; the resurrection of the unjust will take place a thousand years later, at the close of the millennium. John 5:28, 29; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 20:5-10.

12. That the finally impenitent, including Satan, the author of sin, will, by the fires of the last day, be reduced to a state of non-existence, becoming as though they had not been, thus purging the universe of God of sin and sinners. Rom. 6:23; Mal. 4:1-3; Rev. 20:9, 10; Obediah 16.

13. That no prophetic period is given in the Bible to reach to the second advent, but that the longest one, the 2300 days of Dan. 8:14, terminated in 1844, and brought us to an event called the cleansing of the sanctuary.

14. That the true sanctuary, of which the tabernacle on earth was a type, is the temple of God in Heaven, of which Paul speaks in Hebrews 8 and onward, and of which the Lord Jesus, as our great high priest, is minister; and that the priestly work of our Lord is the antitype of the work of the Jewish priests of the former dispensation; that this heavenly sanctuary is the one to be cleansed at the end of the 2300 days of Dan. 8:14; its cleansing being, as in the type, a work of judgment, beginning with the entrance of Christ as the high priest upon the judgment phase of His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary foreshadowed in the earthly service of cleansing the sanctuary on the day of atonement. This work of judgment in the heavenly sanctuary began in 1844. Its completion will close human probation.

15. That God, in the time of the judgment and in accordance with His uniform dealing with the human family in warning them of coming events vitally affecting their destiny (Amos 3:6, 7), sends forth a proclamation of the approach of the second advent of Christ; that this work is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; and that their threefold message brings to view a work of reform to prepare a people to meet Him at His coming.

16. That the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary, synchronizing with the period of the proclamation of the message of Revelation 14, is a time of investigative judgment, first with reference to the dead, and secondly, with reference to the living. This investigative judgment determines who of the myriads sleeping in the dust of the earth are worthy of a part in the first resurrection, and who of its living multitudes are worthy of translation. 1 Peter 4:17, 18; Dan. 7:9, 10; Rev. 14:6,7; Luke 20:35.

17. That the followers of Christ should be a godly people, not adopting the unholy maxims nor conforming to the unrighteous ways of the world, not loving its sinful pleasures nor countenancing its follies. That the believer should recognize his body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, and that therefore he should clothe that body in neat, modest, dignified apparel. Further, that in eating and drinking and in his entire course of conduct he should shape his life as becometh a follower of the meek and lowly Master. Thus the believer will be led to abstain from all intoxicating drinks, tobacco, and other narcotics, and the avoidance of every body- and soul-defiling habit and practice. 1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 9:25; 10:31; 1 Tim. 2:9, 10; 1 John 2:6.

18. That the divine principle of tithes and offerings for the support of the gospel is an acknowledgment of God's ownership in our lives, and that we are stewards who must render account to Him of all that He has committed to our possession. Lev. 27:30; Mal. 3:8-12; Matt. 23:23; 1 Cor. 9:9-14; 2 Cor. 9:6-15.

19. That God has placed in His church the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as enumerated in 1 Corinthians 12 Ephesians 4. That these gifts operate in harmony with the divine principles of the Bible, and are given for the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, the edifying of the body of Christ. Rev. 12:17; 19:10; 1 Cor. 1:5-7.

20. That the second coming of Christ is the great hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel and plan of salvation. His coming will be literal, personal, and visible. Many important events will be associated with His return, such as the resurrection of the dead, the destruction of the wicked, the purification of the earth, the reward of the righteous, the establishment of His everlasting kingdom. The almost complete fulfillment of various lines of prophecy, particularly those found

in the books of Daniel and the Revelation, with existing conditions in the physical, social, industrial, political, and religious worlds indicates that Christ's coming "is near, even at the doors." The exact time of that event has not been foretold. Believers are exhorted to be ready, for "in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man" will be revealed. Luke 21:25-27; 17:26-39; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 1:7; Heb. 9:28; James 5:1-8; Joel 3:9-16; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Dan. 7:27; Matt. 24:36, 44.

21. That the millennial reign of Christ covers the period between the first and the second resurrections, during which time the saints of all ages will live with their blessed Redeemer in Heaven. At the end of the Millennium, the Holy City with all the saints will descend to the earth. The wicked, raised in the second resurrection, will go up on the breadth of the earth with Satan at their head to compass the camp of the saints, when fire will come down from God out of Heaven and devour them. In the conflagration which destroys Satan and his host, the earth itself will be regenerated and cleansed from the effects of the curse. Thus the universe of God will be purified from the foul blot of sin. Rev. 20; Zech. 14:1-4; 2 Peter 3:7-10.

22. That God will make all things new. The earth, restored to its pristine beauty, will become forever the abode of the saints of the Lord. The promise to

Abraham, that through Christ he and his seed should possess the earth throughout the endless ages of eternity, will be fulfilled. The kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the king under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him. Christ, the Lord, will reign supreme and every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and such as are in the sea will ascribe blessing and honor and glory and power unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever. Gen. 13:14-17; Rom. 4:13; Heb. 11:8-16; Matt. 5:5; Isa. 35; Rev. 21:1-7; Dan. 7:27; Rev. 5:13.

APPENDIX XLIV

W. F. CALDWELL LETTER

1

From W. F. Caldwell

Melbourne, Australia
May 28, 1893

Dear Sister White:

After seeing Brother Starr, I was very anxious to see [the] testimony he told me you sent to Brother Stanton.

With earnest prayer that God would show me truth and shield me from the deceptions of Satan, I laid my Bible open on the bed, and your letter on that, praying to be guided by the Word of God. After reading, I am still not satisfied for reasons which will appear later. I therefore write you because I am anxious for the truth.

First, let me in a few words give you a bird's-eye view of myself. I say nothing in self-justification, but simply state things as they have been and are, pertaining to my religious experience. I always believed the Bible was the Word of God, but never believed in eternal torment. Could not see how a God of love could punish like a fiend, although believed in natural immortality because was taught so. Never joined churches because saw so much hypocrisy and always despised that above all things.

Brother William Knapp-Corydon-Penna was one who called my attention to Sabbath and state of dead. I first told him he had a different Bible from mine, but when satisfied on that, I began to study. In a few says accepted the theory of the Truth—as far as he could lead me then. Began keeping the Sabbath—kept it about three months. No one asked me if I wanted to join the church. They did not appear to take any interest in how I was getting along, but just let me go. And some of them set a very poor example. Of course that was no excuse for me through.

The devil took more interest in me. A good position was held out as a bait and a nice young lady showed me favor. Although her people thought SDA people were kin to the devil (and do yet), not to weary you, I yielded to woman and the devil—as many a man has done before me. Was married and now have two boys 4 and 6 years old.

My mind was never satisfied though. I got some of your writings, "Thoughts," "Bible Readings," and took Review two years, I think, out of the seven. August 1, 1891, I kept my first Sabbath—as the Sabbath. Before, I kept Saturday, as Brother Jones says. I don't know why or when I began to believe the testimonies, but God through His Spirit caused me to see their divine origin. And I have great faith in them.

The last Week of Prayer I was delivering Christmas orders for Great Controversy and could not get to church. I felt my loss keenly, and asked God to make it up to me at home (in a measure). After studying a couple of days I became so interested I could not stop. The beauties of the Word opened to me as never before, but I would seem to come to a certain point and could get no further, the blessing within reach, as it were, but I could not grasp it. This intensified my interest. Point after point opened before me—some I had believed but did not know how to explain; others perfectly new to me, but mostly familiar to SDA people.

Still, there was something I could not reach until one Sabbath it flashed across my mind, the link which connected all the lines together, finishing the studies so to speak. But if it was true, I saw it was very important, for our people were on the verge of destruction and did not know it. I only had Steps to Christ, the Bible, and Great Controversy, vol. 4. I will briefly give you advance light resulting from those studies. Much strengthened by later ones.

Oh, my sister, grant this a careful reading. I quote your own authority: "If any of our brethren receive new light he should frankly state his position, and every minister should search the Scriptures with a spirit of candor to see whether the positions can be sustained by God's Word" (RH July 26, 1892). Had this privilege been granted, things might have been different, but it was not.

In Review, March 14, 1893, I read: "The Lord looks to the humble and it may be He will send a message to those who are high in position through an humble instrument, and He would have those who are in positions of trust of so humble a spirit that they will hear and heed the message and arouse from their lethargy."

And in a testimony dated George's Terrace, January 9, 1893, you say: "Had our brethren been free from prejudice and walking in humility they would have been ready to receive light from whatever source" etc. (Bulletin p. 419).

Such things were a regular inspiration to me, believing as I did that God had shown me some things and laid on me the burden of presenting them before our brethren at Battle Creek. But they were prejudiced and were not humble enough to receive me and would not allow me to present what I wanted before them, but treated me like a harmless idiot. Just think of it—an unknown, unlettered man like me coming there to show them new truths. I thought truly, "If God would send a message and wait for these older brethren to open the way it would never reach the people." Review July 26-1892. Also of our Saviour's words, "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes."

But I would not weary you. Only desire you to understand I have not struck off bullheadedly without cause or reason, as some say.

2

Now to the point: It is not necessary for me to prove to you that [the] SDA church is the last church on earth, or that being such she is the "Virgin daughter of Babylon" (she came out or was born of Babylon but does not give birth to another church). Or as spoken of again, "The Virgin daughter of Israel." The Laodicean or last church becomes lukewarm and fails to realize it for which the True Witness--Christ--says, "I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:16). He does not add except thou repent but it is a positive statement, "I will." And if you notice, the counsel [in] verses 18-21 is addressed to individuals not to the church.

Isaiah 47 says of the "Virgin daughter of Babylon, Thy nakedness shall be uncovered." Amos 5:1, 2 laments that "the Virgin of Israel is fallen, she shall no more rise."

In [the] camp meeting appeal dated Oakland, August 1, 1891, you say, "The Lord has a controversy with His people. In our large churches the greatest evils exist because these have the greatest light. Will the church see where she has fallen? There are many who are living in guilty self-deception." After exhorting to whole-hearted zealous action, you say Christ "declares I will come unto thee quickly and remove thy candlestick out of its place except thou repent." How "long shall this warning be resisted?" "How long shall it be slighted?" Had they heeded the word then and answered, "No longer," how I would rejoice with you now.

In Special Testimonies to Ministers, page 30, dated February 18, 1892, you say, "As a people who have had great light many are represented by the five sleeping virgins." After showing the hideous sins committed in our midst, you give the effect: "These characters are all through our churches and as the result the churches are weak and sickly and ready to die." In Review March 14, 1893, you say, "If those who profess to know the Lord did indeed have an experimental knowledge of God, the church would be quickened from the paralysis that is upon her." That is about ten weeks ago, you see. May God pity His people.

Our people insist this church is to go through. Exactly the ones Jeremiah 5 speaks of [in] verse 23 and on, "This people have a revolting heart; they are revolted and gone. Neither say they in their heart, let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season" (Why?) "He reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest. Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you. For among my people are found wicked men: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men. As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit."

Compare this last with Rev. 18:2, "A cage for every unclean and hateful bird." Again referring to Jeremiah, 3:3 says, "Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain. And thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed." [Jeremiah] 6:15 says, "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: Therefore they shall fall among them that fall."

Amos 9:9 speaks of [a] sifting time. Verse 10 says, "All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword which say (note) the evil shall not overtake nor prevent us."

You yourself say Ezekiel 9 refers to us and shows "the Lord's sanctuary--church--was the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God . . . the glory of the Lord had departed from Israel . . . The ancient men, those to whom God had given great light, had betrayed their trust" (Testimony 31, pages 106, 107.) Then is it not proper to "come out of her my people that ye receive not of her plagues"? "Oh that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears that I might weep for the slain of the daughter of my people" (Jer. 9:1).

"Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and bring you unto Zion" (Jer 3:14). Note the lamentation of the church. Micah 7:1 [says] "There is no cluster but as Isaiah 17:6 says, "two or three berries" in one place "and four or five" in another." With you I cry, "Oh, that our people like Ninevah would repent in sackcloth and ashes that the Lord may turn away His wrath from us."

"They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly saying peace, peace when there was no peace" (Jer. 8:11). "We looked for peace but no good came and for a time of health and behold trouble" (verse 15).

For the love of our dear Master, Sister, shall we not "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sound an alarm in my holy mountain" (Joel 2:1). "It may be they will hear all the evil I purpose to do unto them that they may return every man from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin" (Jer. 36:3).

Oh, cannot something be done to arouse our people, for destruction cometh like a whirlwind. "The time is come, the day of trouble is near, and not the sounding again of the mountains" (Eze. 7:7). Few know how complete arrangements are in America. Arms are stored. Men are trained. And all awaits the word of the Pope. They have the reigns of government in their hands and have already declared what reforms (?) they are going to make. From things I hear, I believe the instructions to punish heretics are already in hand. And they wait for what? The English have begun to withdraw their troops from Egypt. First regiment leaves June 3 (I think is date). She alone preserves Turkey. Then what?

My dear sister, I am not a "time setter." Neither is Brother Stanton, but we long to see our people aroused to the perils right upon us. Oh, that they would afflict themselves before God and repent, but I fear they will not. Your

opposition to the message of Brother Stanton, which you seem to misunderstand, has increased their complacency and now they feel much more truly that they are "rich and increased with goods," and "he reserveth unto them the weeks of the harvest." Why should they not if they are the church which "the gates of hell cannot prevail against"?

Brother Stanton does not say the SDA church is Babylon, but that by rejecting light--especially [the] Laodicean message--she rejects Christ, and as you say in Testimony 31-296, "The glory of the Lord departs from her." When Christ began His ministry He cleansed the temple (as also at [the] close of His work here) by driving sinners out of her. Because the church was starting then it must be cleansed, but now it is different. The church's work is about done, so Christ calls His people out of it that He may punish it for its unfaithfulness.

If you ever plead with God, if we ever needed a special revelation from heaven, let it be now, let it come now. Oh, God spare Thy people for Thine own name's sake. Amen.

In Special Testimonies page 17, I read, "When Satan is working with his lying wonders the time has come foretold in the Revelation when the angel that shall lighten the whole earth with his glory will proclaim the fall of Babylon and call upon God's people to forsake her." In Review, March 14, 1893, "The whole confederacy of evil led by Satan is seeking diligently to increase the ranks of those who transgress the law of God. And the law of the land sustains them in their apostasy."

Then, my sister, it is time for the message [that] Babylon is fallen, and if we are wrong, and proclaiming it wrong, why are not those who are right proclaiming it right?

May the Lord of heaven reveal to you an answer which shall correct error and bind us all together in the bands of love. I desire truth above all things. I left my all in response to a call from my Lord (as I believed). If I erred, I can and do from my heart inquire with Paul, "What wilt thou have me to do Lord?" As God's messenger I seek answer from you.

I have written, as I do not wish to cause any more trouble than necessary. I consulted with Brother Starr and he agrees that this may be the best way. However, if you wish me to come there I will, gladly. I would like very much to see you, but it costs considerable more, and if I am going home on [the] next boat I must take [the] cheapest route.

If you want me to come, please wire me. Address simply Caldwell, Melbourne, and I will leave directions for delivery. If I do not hear from you before June 9th (ninth) I will start to San Francisco via Sydney and expect a letter from you at Auckland. Address W. F. Caldwell, c/o SS Mariposa, Steerage.

May God bless and keep you until that blessed day.

Your brother in hope,
W. F. Caldwell

Boat leaves Auckland June 17. Please do not fail to write me there if you think best for me to go that way, for how can I return without knowing the truth in this matter? I cannot. I'd rather go to--anywhere else.

NB

Brother Stanton does not refute obligation to pay tithes but thinks all should put everything into God's cause, and go in with it, for "If we have the Spirit of Christ we will work as He worked." The grace of God abide with you all. W.F.C.

Melbourne, Tuesday

Dear Sister:

Since mailing your letter I learn the boat does not go until tomorrow.

The connection is going to be very close. If any delay should occur so you could not reach me here June 9th, please wire Brother Daniells at Sydney. I will inform him of my departure on that boat. Oh, I do so much long to hear from you. To know the worst, or to know the best, alone will give me rest.

Before rising this morning I picked up my Bible. It opened to 2 Peter first chapter, which I read. What a precious one it is. Especially, 3, 4, and 10. After continued pursuit of an object it is very trying to wait with nothing [to] busy one's self about. Please do not disappoint me.

Your anxious brother,
W. F. Caldwell

APPENDIX XLV

“THEOLOGICAL CONTROVERSY AND A CHANGE OF JOB”

charge" that made an institution succeed, he had stated in a parting speech.³⁹ True. But without that "special ability" and the willingness to spend oneself in the service of others, nothing succeeds either. Prescott had demonstrated both. In 1909 he left the *Review* reluctantly. It was work he had come to enjoy and he would have preferred to stay, particularly as editor. The theological controversy over how to interpret Daniel 8:13 had swelled painfully during the previous two years. It was polarizing the ministry and, despite Mrs. White's appeals, it would not quiet down. With Prescott out of the *Review* it might

Chapter 13



Theological Controversy and a Change of Job

Compared to the Kellogg conflict, the theological controversy in Adventism over "the daily" was a mere storm in a teacup. For *Review* editor Prescott, however, it was a serious and costly business. Without doubt, he had correctly followed the right procedures required for dealing with matters of dispute, but that was of little consequence. To his dismay he found that educating the church and attempting to broaden its thinking even on a minor doctrinal point could produce extreme hostility. Before the conflict was over, Prescott was out of office. Had he been dealt with fairly?

Prescott had returned relaxed and refreshed to Washington from his 1907 trip through the Far East and Europe. He had hardly had time to settle properly at his editorial desk again, however, when he found himself press-ganged into leading the forces on one side of a rapidly escalating controversy. Marshalling the opposition was S. N. Haskell, who had initiated the conflict with some saber rattling several months before. There were "errors" here and there, and some were "very dangerous," he had warned Mrs. White in June. "Leading brethren" were adopting positions that "undermine present truth." Then, casting caution aside, he openly declared, "There are many who know that Prescott and I differ and are really waiting to see how that will yet come out."¹

The point over which Haskell and Prescott differed was the interpretation of two words in Daniel 8:11-13, "the daily." William Miller, using a complicated series of biblical parallels, had asserted that the expression referred to Roman paganism. This paganism had been "taken away" by the Papacy in the year 508, when pagan England had supposedly been converted to Christianity. James White, J. N. Andrews, and Joseph Bates had all followed Miller in adopting this view, and Uriah Smith had set the interpretation in concrete by a full development of the idea in his book *Daniel and Revelation*.² Several things made the disputed text exceedingly important to Haskell. For a start, it was an integral part of the most important biblical passage used to substantiate the denomination's "sanctuary" doctrine. It also concerned what Haskell considered to be an important prophetic date. Further, the position had been taught by the "pioneers." Most important of all, however, was the fact that Mrs. White, in his view, had stated clearly that the "old view" was correct. Had she not written, in 1850,

Then I saw in relation to the "daily" (Dan 8:12) that the word "sacrifice" was supplied by man's wisdom, and does not belong to the text, and that the Lord gave the correct view of it to those who gave the judgment hour cry. When union existed, before 1844, nearly all were united on the correct view of the "daily"; but in the confusion since 1844, other views have been embraced, and darkness and confusion have followed.³

For Haskell, the statement was clear-cut. Further discussion was quite illegitimate. Mrs. White had spoken.

The actual interpretation itself and the arguments for and against it were not that critical, Haskell explained. "Personally, it don't amount to a hill of beans to me." What did matter though was the authority of Mrs. White. To adopt any interpretation other than that which Mrs. White had indicated was to undermine her authority. Haskell saw no way around it.⁴

Prescott, on the other hand, understood the term the "daily" to refer not to paganism but to Christ's mediatorial ministry. It was an expression drawn from the tabernacle services that clearly pointed to Christ. Through its doctrine of the mass and the mediation of a human priesthood, the Catholic Church had obscured or "taken away" the mediatorial work of Christ.

This "new view," according to Prescott, was more in harmony with the biblical context and with the facts of history. More important

still, it made the interpretation of the whole prophecy of Daniel 8 thoroughly Christocentric. Daniells concurred with the professor. The matter of the correctness of a doubtful date of history "pales before the importance of the glorious truth . . . regarding the ministry of Christ," he would later write in defense of the "new view."⁵

Prescott recognized the difficulty presented by Mrs. White's endorsement of the "old view." But he argued that the larger context of her 1850 article provided a way out. Mrs. White was primarily concerned with correcting a problem of "time-setting." The "imperfect" statement on "the daily" should be re-interpreted in that larger setting. Again Daniells concurred. "It is a great injustice to your mother," he wrote to W. C. White, "for men to place an interpretation on her words that arrays her against all history. . . . Another interpretation equally as well founded can be given." Such an approach he was sure would save the church and Mrs. White from "great humiliation."⁶

Although probably the most prominent American exponent of the "new view," Prescott was by no means the originator of it. L. A. Conradi, president of the Union Conference in Europe, had been the first to publish the new interpretation in his widely circulated book on the prophecies of Daniel. But the book was printed in German and therefore caused barely a ripple in the United States. Before publication he had asked Mrs. White to advise him if there was a problem. Receiving no response, he had assumed she had no objection and had gone ahead with the printing.

Prescott had tentatively raised the new interpretation with his fellow-workers in England in 1899 and found that some were troubled by it. E. E. Andross, for example, had been troubled enough this time to inform Haskell. Prescott also later discussed the idea with Daniells and with Uriah Smith. Like Haskell and Andross, Smith was not impressed either. Apart from a veiled reference the professor made to the topic in his 1902 Sabbath School lesson series, he had avoided discussing the matter in public.

After 1902 Prescott and Daniells were too preoccupied by the Kellogg crisis to give the matter much attention, but whenever Prescott's mind turned to "the daily" he became enthusiastic. His rare discussions with Daniells and Spicer on the topic convinced him more and more that the new interpretation provided a vital prophetic mandate for the new Christocentric focus that he had been trying to

encourage in Adventism. It would give the church a new impetus. But Daniells urged constraint and Prescott waited. He hoped, however, that "at the proper time" and "in the proper way" the matter would be dealt with. Spicer would later comment in the professor's defense that Prescott had been "very conservative" and responsible in not agitating the question.⁷ But by October 1907 Prescott was convinced that the "proper time" had arrived.

In that month two former publishing house editors published a volume challenging the Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8. In the process they heavily scorned Smith's interpretation of "the daily."⁸ When the General Conference Committee asked Prescott to write a rebuttal to the book in the *Review* (without, of course, naming the book), he declined. Frankly, but in good conscience, the professor stated that it was "impossible" for him to interpret the chapter as Smith had done. Smith's position was indefensible! The committee, of course, was immediately interested in hearing Prescott's view. The next question was how Mrs. White would react to such a reinterpretation of her *Early Writings* statement? The professor was requested to write and ask.

If Prescott could not defend Smith, others felt they could. Pioneer Adventist John Loughborough, for example, submitted an article of rebuttal for the *Review*. Prescott, however, felt obliged to reject it. "We are being attacked from various sides now," he explained. "I desire to use all care not to give anyone . . . ground upon which to successfully make warfare on our teachings."⁹

At the same time, Prescott had crossed swords with Haskell on the topic. Haskell had asked the professor to review his book *Daniel, The Prophet*, and Prescott had replied suggesting changes to his presentation of chapter 8. In his letter the professor had remarked that it would be only a question of time before "the present teaching will be discarded." It was a bold but highly unpalatable prediction, and Haskell could not stomach it. "We ought to understand such expressions by the aid of the Spirit of Prophecy," he shot back. It had been given for just "this purpose." In this way "all points are to be solved."¹⁰ Prescott was not convinced. The battle had been joined.

Haskell was sure Mrs. White would not stand for such license in the use of her writings as Prescott was suggesting. If only she knew. In fact, she needed to know. He anxiously pressed her assistants for an interview. But both W. C. White and C. C. Crisler were aware of

what was happening and they dutifully informed Prescott. The professor replied in haste. Crisler must arrange a "delay" in any presentation to Mrs. White. It was important that "the whole subject" be "properly presented." Daniells would soon be at Elmhaven and could make the case.¹¹

Two weeks later, Prescott himself was making the six-day rail crossing to the West Coast. Urgent requests had reached Washington. Prescott's scholarly help was needed in preparing a response to recent criticisms of Mrs. White's work by Battle Creek's Dr. C. E. Stewart (the doctor had widely circulated a small blue-covered paperback listing a number of complaints). Elmhaven editors were also working on some manuscripts on the Ezra period, and Prescott was needed in preparing these for publication. Crisler wanted to make sure his chronology was correct. Prescott's presence at Elmhaven would also allow opportunity for a round-table conference on "the daily" question. Several others had written letters of enquiry to Mrs. White which had been pigeonholed until she could consider all sides of the question. Making such a conference more urgent was the premature publication of an article boldly advocating the "new view" in a recent issue of the *Signs of the Times* edited by M. C. Wilcox in California. Prescott feared for the reaction. "Common ground" urgently needed to be found.¹²

Crisler and W. C. White were grateful for Prescott's editorial help during his trip west. He had worked through a mountain of manuscripts, written a new publisher's foreword to *Steps to Christ*, and given counsel on many problems. It had been a "splendid" visit from Crisler's perspective. Prescott wished he could feel as good about the conference that had been held on "the daily."

The contending parties on "the daily" had met on Sunday morning, January 26, in one of Mrs. White's offices. Haskell and his wife, and J. N. Loughborough had participated, along with Crisler, W. C. White, D. E. Robinson, Daniells, and Prescott. The outspoken and feisty Mrs. Haskell thought the meeting had been a disaster. "Brother Prescott," she wrote, "is so sure he's right and everyone else wrong." He had talked for four hours and then let Haskell and Loughborough respond. But the "two old men over seventy-four years of age" had weary heads by then! She felt it was "hardly a fair chance."¹³

Haskell shared his wife's opinion. Next day found him writing what Daniells thought was a very "uncharitable attack" on the

professor. Prescott had erred in the Anna Phillips case; he taught exactly the same things as Kellogg; and he certainly couldn't be trusted in the matter of "the daily," Haskell wrote to Daniells. Three days later he sent a copy of the letter to Mrs. White.¹⁴

The week following the conference, Prescott continued to work at Elmshaven and had further opportunities to discuss the matter with W. C. White and Crisler. Both apparently felt quite comfortable with his approach to the problematic *Early Writings* statement. (They had not yet received the copy of Haskell's letter.) Prescott left with a clear agreement with W. C. White that he could now go ahead and write an exposition of Daniel 8 in the *Review*. The six-day trip back East provided him time to work out his outline. By the time he arrived home he had planned a whole series on the book of Daniel.

Haskell, along with other *Review* readers, learned of the intended series from an announcement in the March 5 issue. He was determined to fight. If Prescott went ahead with his series on Daniel, Haskell threatened to W. C. White, he would circulate an old 1842 chart supporting the "old view" of "the daily." The chart had been explicitly endorsed by Mrs. White in the 1840's. He had had the plates made already.

The threat worked. Both White and Crisler wrote to Prescott urging delay. White added an apology explaining that he had forgotten a caution he was meant to have passed on from his mother. "About the time you left here Mother told me that there were some things presented to her that would lead her to caution you about publishing in the *Review* just now."¹⁵

Unfortunately, the caution came too late to prevent the mass circulation of an advertising brochure prepared by the circulation manager announcing the series and promoting a circulation drive for the *Review*. The editor had taken "careful and safe counsel" and given "hard study" to "some contested points of our former interpretation," declared the flyer with a typical advertising brochure's attention-grabbing flair. The series "would give *Review* readers some unusually interesting and highly constructive thoughts."¹⁶ The brochure was ill-advised. Such high powered approaches might help sell magazines, but they would not help Prescott change church teachings. What was needed was less drama and fanfare, not more.

Upon receipt of the cautions from Elmshaven in early 1908, Prescott expressed his willingness to withhold publication "for a

time." But he was disappointed and discouraged to find so much resistance to "new light." Why should there be so much suspicion and bitterness toward him personally (a copy of Haskell's unpleasant letter to Daniells had come into his possession). Why single him out in such a personal attack? Other editors, like M. C. Wilcox, had studied the matter for themselves and had come to the same conclusion. Why was it that only Prescott was untrustworthy? And why not ban Conradi's book? It had been in circulation for years. The professor became almost totally despondent.

A family crisis compounded Prescott's discouragement. He had returned from California to find his wife, Sarah, seriously ill with cancer. Major surgery in Baltimore had been necessary and for a time Prescott had feared she would not survive. Fortunately, the surgery was a success and Sarah slowly recovered. But the sobering experience drained him. "Poor man," wrote Daniells to Crisler, "he is continually overworked and his physical strength and vitality are so low that every additional burden seems like a mountain." Sarah's bout with cancer "proved to be nearly the last straw."¹⁷

In another letter written to W. C. White the same day, Daniells spoke much more frankly. The president, in fact, was deeply worried about his colleague. It seemed that the professor "would definitely . . . retire from the work for a time," he reported. Prescott had told him "he did not think he would try to hold on any longer." He had been working "close to the breaking down line" for a long time. Daniells was distressed because he did not want to lose the professor. A "keen scholarly man" with "keen vision," he was "greatly needed" in the editor's chair. His "good perception of what to leave out of the *Review* and what to put in—the latter being more important"—was extremely valuable.¹⁸

As it happened, Daniells' fears did not materialize—at least not in 1908. With Sarah's recovery, Prescott's courage also returned and he managed to continue "pulling along." But the professor's nervous health remained precarious. He was walking an emotional tightrope.

While he waited for further word from Elmshaven, Prescott met twice with the General Conference Committee to explain his views on Daniel 8. The response encouraged him. As he saw it, "there was an almost unanimous conviction" among the brethren that the approach he was suggesting was "warranted by both scripture and history."¹⁹ Before a month was out Prescott received the green light. He could

go ahead with the planned series on Daniel. Instead of just looking at Daniel 8, however, he would write an exposition of the whole book, dealing with the sanctuary questions simply as they came up in their "natural place." Beginning May 14, the series proceeded slowly. The professor hoped that by the time he got to the "theological portion" emotions would have settled. It was a vain hope.

Out in California, where he served as conference president, Haskell continued to stir up the dust, firing off protests in various directions. One salvo he directed at Crisler for Elmhaven's "unwise" course in encouraging Prescott. He would "not be responsible for the result" if Prescott published anything, he threatened hotly. Another salvo he directed at the two Washington leaders through W. C. White. White should consider arranging a change of jobs for both Prescott and Daniells. "Leading men" were rallying to his side, claimed Haskell. The Washington men should be exceedingly careful. The best answer to Prescott's heresy, he concluded, would be to widely distribute *Early Writings* and the 1842 chart. Church members could then read and see for themselves the obvious error.²⁰

Haskell found an eager ally in the Southern Publishing Association at Nashville, Tennessee. Yes, they would publish his chart and editor L. A. Smith gladly advertised it in Southern's journal, *The Watchman*. It required stiff resistance from Daniells to prevent the arrangement from being carried through. But eventually, under General Conference pressure, the advertisement was withdrawn and the chart was not printed—at least officially. On a private basis, however, Haskell still had the chart published and circulated.²¹

Unfortunately for the California president, his other defensive strategy was also frustrated. *Early Writings* was out of print and in spite of repeated pestering, Elmhaven refused to give him permission to have it reprinted. He felt very badly over this defeat and could not understand the withholding of what he considered vital ammunition. "It almost overcame me," he wrote later to Mrs. White. In the meantime he did his best to besmirch Prescott's character and to persuade anyone he met of the terrible danger to the church.²²

Prescott's response to Haskell's provocation was predictably gracious, but he was clearly getting exasperated. "I have shown you plainly," he responded to one pointed letter from Haskell, "that your interpretation would make the Spirit of Prophecy contradict history." And there are, he continued, "from fifty to one hundred ministers in

the denomination who I must think are as intelligent and honest as any of us, who think your interpretation . . . is incorrect." If Haskell could raise personal matters then Prescott could do the same. Had not Haskell also received several rebukes from Mrs. White? The professor did not "think it was kind or wise to watch for each other's failings and make charges of this kind."²³

By late August, though, it was becoming clear to Prescott and other church leaders that it would be counter-productive for the *Review* to proceed with the exposition of Daniel. Misunderstandings were arising on all sides. The series was therefore abandoned on August 24, while Prescott was still only dealing with chapter 3. From Daniells' perspective, Prescott had been very circumspect and had done his best to avoid controversy. He and the others who shared his views had "counselled quietly with their brethren" and had "taken with care every step pointed out by the Spirit of Prophecy as the right course in such a case." They were still "willing to counsel." But both Daniells and Prescott were becoming anxious about what kind of report Mrs. White was being given by Haskell.²⁴

Sometime back in mid-1908 Prescott had received a letter of warning from Mrs. White (his reply seems to indicate he received it some considerable time after it had been written). The professor had at times come near to making shipwreck of his faith, she said, and he was still in danger of making mistakes. He tended to place too much weight on minor matters. Sometimes silence would "reveal a spirit of wisdom and discretion."²⁵ The letter did not mention anything specific and it puzzled the professor—at least until Daniells had a chance to talk personally with Mrs. White later in 1908.

Daniells reported that he had talked at length with her on "the daily." She had not been well recently and therefore had had difficulty concentrating on the matter, but she stated she had no "light" on it. Daniells' report led Prescott to believe that from "what Mrs. White said" the way would "be opened" to deal with "the daily" when his series came to chapter 8. Later again, upon Daniells' return to Washington, Prescott had learned "about the situation in California." The president had apparently informed Prescott that during recent months Haskell had been in weekly contact with Mrs. White and had at times entertained her as a guest in his house. He had misrepresented Prescott's position on "the daily" and had endeavored to "prejudice the case" against the new view.²⁶

With the missing parts of the puzzle now fitting together, Prescott replied to Elmhaven. Realizing that Mrs. White was not well and that her staff was endeavoring to shield her from as many unnecessary burdens as possible, he directed his reply to W. C. White. Neither W. C. White nor Daniells expected Mrs. White to live much longer in 1908—her sickness seemed so serious. They were anxious to protect her “from the well-meaning intentions of her friends” as well as her enemies, so that her last days would be as tranquil as possible. Choosing his words with care Prescott noted that he had received a letter sometime earlier from Mrs. White “containing some good counsel” and some things that he was “quite at a loss to understand.” The sensitive wording of Prescott’s correspondence suggests that he was dealing with a very delicate situation. He was anxious not to give offence and yet also to try to avoid being the victim of misunderstandings.²⁷

In phrases that intimated that he was now privy to information that W. C. White also knew about, he explained that Daniells had informed him about “the situation in California.” He thought he now understood more clearly what Mrs. White “had in mind in writing to me” and was glad that she in turn “had a better understanding of the position” which he held on Daniel 8. Would W. C. White convey to his mother that he would “try to profit by the counsel” she had written.²⁸

Prescott did not have the opportunity, however, to profit from two other letters Mrs. White wrote him shortly after her first letter. The two later letters contained much more pointed and direct warnings. Prescott was in danger of “making a mountain out of a molehill” she said. He should not agitate the “daily” and raise questions in the *Review*. The whole issue would become a great mountain unless he determined to let it alone. He should focus on other things. But neither of the two letters were sent in 1908. In fact, Prescott did not receive them until two years later. At that time he had withdrawn from the work and was in New England recuperating from a nervous collapse brought on by the death of his wife and the trauma of his being removed from the editorship of the *Review*. According to Elder White, Mrs. White had been undecided about the letters and had amended them several times but never sent them. W. C. White had eventually sent them on his own authority.²⁹

The late receipt of the two documents hurt and bewildered the professor. “It is a little difficult for me to understand why they were not sent to me at the time, if they were designed to be of any practical benefit.” Circumstances had changed so completely since the letters were written, however, that he wondered what “difference” they could make in his “present course of action.”³⁰ He had not been editor of the *Review* “for more than a year.” Prescott had evidently underestimated the seriousness of Mrs. White’s concerns on the “daily.” The letters would have corrected this. Why had they not been sent when they were needed?

The simple answer would be that the Elmhaven staff simply forgot to carry through on Mrs. White’s request and mail them. Other factors suggest, however, that the situation was more complex. Mrs. White had asked that the letters be read to her several times as they were being readied. Various handwritten amendments on the typed documents suggest that Mrs. White perhaps felt somewhat ambivalent about the whole situation. Was Prescott really putting “new timbers” in the foundations as some suggested? Was Haskell exaggerating and possibly misrepresenting the problem to her? She was not sure. She struggled to understand the issues. The Lord had not given her any “light” on it. It was not a “vital question.” Why did the brethren persist in making such a big thing of it?

Evidently, Mrs. White thought that the warning letters had eventually been sent. In a letter to Haskell rebuking him for circulating his chart, she mentioned that she had specifically asked Prescott not to put anything in the *Review*. Even W. C. White quoted key portions of the two letters in his correspondence to other church leaders on the topic of “the daily.” Such use of the letters assumed that Prescott had received them and may have indicated to others that he was refusing to follow the counsel. It is no wonder then that Prescott was bewildered and felt unjustly treated when others began to blame him for wrongfully urging “the daily” during this period.³¹

Other misgivings between Washington and Elmhaven complicated the delicate political relationship between the two centers at this time. The General Conference men, for example, were extremely worried over the large debts the Californians were accumulating in their drive to establish new health institutions. They knew that W. C. White was not a strong business leader and feared that he was stretching the church too far by fostering the acquiring of new

institutions too quickly. They also worried about his independent publishing work which was tending to upset the market.³²

On the other hand, the Californians were beginning to feel that the General Conference was wanting to control absolutely everything. Why did Washington insist that everything had to go through the General Conference? Was Daniells becoming too strong and independent? Was he slipping away from W. C. White? Strong leaders lived on both sides of the continent. A quiet unspoken power struggle began to simmer over the allocation of resources and over who should determine the direction of the church. The distance between the two places and the rapid development of the church seemed to highlight the feeling at Elmhaven that it might be losing its influence over church affairs. The fears brought a letter of concern from W. C. White.³³

According to White, his mother was worried that Daniells was being influenced too much by Prescott and others like I. H. Evans and E. R. Palmer. Daniells should be careful of the weaknesses of these men, he cautioned. The president was perplexed. He needed every good helper he could get and these were valuable men. He waited three months before writing a very carefully thought out response. Daniells realized that there were political implications but his reply was a masterpiece of bold diplomacy.

Daniells was aware of Prescott's "failings"—just as aware as the professor's opponents in California and Tennessee were. But on the other hand, he had also "seen in him some of the rarest gifts possessed by any man in our ranks." The church needed those gifts. Was he being unduly influenced by Prescott? He did not think so. In fact, he noted bravely, "the man who has the greatest influence over me is the one I am now addressing." Many church officials, he reflected, were inclined to think that he was influenced by W. C. White more than what was "good and safe" for the church. They saw more in White's "weaknesses" and "dangerous tendencies" than they did in his "strong, safe and valuable gifts." But Daniells highly valued W. C. White's gifts. All they could do as brethren, he concluded, was to affirm each other's strengths and help each other's weaknesses.³⁴

Daniells' response took a very balanced stance and at the same time was a loyal defense of his colleagues. But it did not help Prescott. Feeling that he was losing the battle over "the daily," Haskell had busied himself rallying support for his cause and actively campaigning

for a change for Daniells and Prescott. Unless a change was made, "the cause" would be in trouble, he declared to W. C. White.³⁵

A Change at the Review

During the middle years of the first decade (1900-1910), evangelism had not been a very high priority for the General Conference. The conflict with Kellogg and the struggle involved in transferring church headquarters to Washington had monopolized the attention of Daniells and Prescott. Furthermore, in response to Mrs. White's earlier urging, development of the work in the South had been adopted as a priority. Daniells felt he had succeeded in "lifting the cloud in the south" by transferring "a large number of good capable men" to that field.³⁶ Overseas missions had also been a priority in terms of the men and the resources assigned. But during 1908 Mrs. White became increasingly worried that the rising debate over "the daily," regardless of the merits of either side, would further prolong the neglect of large city evangelism. She was determined not to let that happen.

During the 1909 General Conference session held in Washington (May 13-June 6), "the daily" intruded as an unwelcome visitor. Defying a mutually agreed "state of truce," an "old view" defender (O. A. Johnson), had provocatively distributed a privately published pamphlet around the tents. The paper cast "new view" advocates in a very unquestionable light—they were undermining the Spirit of Prophecy.³⁷ In response, delegates decided to discuss the topic openly. Two evening sessions were set aside for the purpose with W. C. White appointed as chairman. But despite his best efforts he could not restrain advocates of the "old view" from descending to the level of personal attack, and the discussions became very combative. L. A. Smith's paper, particularly, cast a large slur on Prescott and Daniells.

Mrs. White fretted over the attitudes that were being displayed. During the conference session she had issued a strong call for the church to take up the work of evangelizing the nation's large cities. Now she worried that her pleas would be drowned out in the waves of emotion generated by the conflict on "the daily." Something had to be done to focus the church's attention on evangelism. It could not afford to be distracted by arguments over inconsequential.

Three days before the session ended she told Prescott that his "ministerial ability" was needed in the cities. He was to unite with other workers "in seeking to bring souls to the truth." She evidently felt that a change would also help in his spiritual growth and advancement. He was "not where the Lord would have him to be."³⁸

A week later, just prior to her leaving Washington, she met with the General Conference Committee and communicated her instruction. Prescott was not to be held in Washington "to do the work that another man can do." Recalling her experience with the professor years earlier in Melbourne, she stated, "he can stand before the people and give the reasons for our faith in an acceptable way. . . . He has a precious gift, and here he is employed in work that other men can do, while there is a dearth of laborers who can warn these large cities." While the professor could still prepare "special literature to go among the people," he should not continue as editor. It was instruction that caught the General Conference Committee by surprise. Not all could see wisdom in the suggestion. Some of the men did not "take willingly to the idea of losing Elder Prescott," Mrs. White later recalled as she told the story to her son Edson. She had been obliged to speak "plainly" to them.³⁹

There were several reasons the committee was reluctant to let Prescott go from the *Review*. The brethren genuinely did not know who could replace him. F. M. Wilcox, the newly appointed associate editor, had been with the *Review* for only two months. The other associate, C. M. Snow, was not considered adequate. W. A. Spicer, the only other person of sufficient stature, could not be spared from his post as secretary of the General Conference.

Another consideration was that Prescott had just launched a new magazine at great expense to the publishing house. This new project had been designed to meet the newly aggressive moves of Roman Catholicism. Who else but Prescott could shepherd that paper along? A further consideration apparently bothered some committee members. They felt that although he had not been the aggressor, Prescott was being singled out—perhaps unfairly—for his involvement in "the daily" controversy. Although Mrs. White had not mentioned this reason at any time in her public discussions, it seemed to some of the brethren that it was part of the hidden agenda. Their hunch was apparently true, but it was not confirmed until later by her associates, Haskell and G. B. Starr. The two men had travelled with Mrs. White

around the eastern states after the conference. They had spread the word that, in private conversations with them, Mrs. White had expressed the fear that Prescott might lead the denomination astray.⁴⁰

Prescott went quietly. In obedience to the counsel, he arranged for his board to elect a replacement for himself. They chose Spicer, and Prescott was asked to continue as an associate editor. He was also asked to continue editing the new monthly *Protestant Magazine*. A few days later he requested the General Conference Committee to provide direction concerning his evangelistic assignment. An advisory committee was appointed and a budget established for a tent and a steropticon. The courageous and cheerful way in which the professor adjusted to the sudden change in his fortunes brought admiration from Daniells. "He has taken the counsel Sister White has given him like a Christian and a whole-souled man, and has helped us in every way possible to make adjustments in the office," he reported to a mutual friend.⁴¹

As might be expected, the Haskells rejoiced in the change. Mrs. Haskell claimed that she had not read more than two editorials in the previous five years because they had "very little charm" for her. "But since the late change," she wrote to Spicer, the editorials were "the first thing read." Her husband had also noticed the difference, she said. "There is a different spirit, all through it."⁴²

If the Haskells thought they noticed a different spirit, it was largely the work of F. M. Wilcox, not Spicer, who retained his secretary's post and simply added the editor's job to it. As he pointed out to G. I. Butler, he was just "editor in the saddle." It was the associate editors who produced the paper. His primary function was "to take the blame when we don't do something somebody wants us to do."⁴³ Two years later Wilcox was given full command.

If Mrs. White had hoped that removing Prescott from the *Review* would help quiet the disturbance on "the daily" she was disappointed. "Old view" exponents launched a major pamphlet campaign soon after the General Conference session. Johnson circulated his paper in every nook and cranny of the field and L. A. Smith followed. Both called into question the General Conference leaders' loyalty to the Spirit of Prophecy.

M. C. Wilcox, from California, urged Daniells to respond. "I know you have been rather hindered because you did not wish to do anything that would stir up division," he wrote, but was it not time

now to frankly set forth the issue?⁴⁴ The only time the "new view" appeared in print in 1909, however, was a veiled allusion to the idea in the context of the week of prayer reading. Spicer called it their "opening shot." Within a few months the skirmishing had again become a major battle.

At the Atlantic Union Conference session in December 1909, several questions were put to the General Conference delegates on the matter. Smith's pamphlet was raising disturbing questions. As a result, a private meeting with the union committee was held to explain the dispute. The committee in turn recommended that a presentation be made to the rest of the delegates. Prescott was asked by Daniells to be the presenter. Even though already familiar with the concept, Daniells was excited by Prescott's explanations. The professor had given "the finest series of studies on the prophecies" he had ever heard, he later enthused to a colleague.⁴⁵ Subsequently, he also arranged for Prescott to repeat the studies at other union sessions and at the college in Washington. On the latter occasion the talks were reported and later developed into a pamphlet.

Daniells defended his actions to W. C. White. "I cannot believe that we are forever to remain silent while these men [Smith, Haskell, Johnson, and Loughborough] are printing and presenting what we believe to be error, to place us in a wrong light before our brethren. . . . Our influence must soon be destroyed." White agreed with the president. It was, he said, "only fair" to defend themselves. He asked for a copy of the pamphlet developed out of Prescott's talks. White also wrote a long letter to Haskell urging restraint and setting out the way disputes should be handled. "The daily" itself was not now the real problem. The two bigger questions that W. C. White felt needed straightening out were 1) attitudes towards each other, and 2) how his mother's writings should or should not be used.⁴⁶

The personal attacks on Daniells' colleagues distressed the president more than anything. Smith, Haskell, and their cohorts, it seemed, were totally committed to destroying "the good name" and the "standing" of their opponents. In a handwritten note to W. C. White in March 1910, Daniells reported on the character assassination that had gone on at the recent union conference session at Nashville, and he urged White to help the "old view" aggressors change their course. The note was marked "for your eyes only." Daniells did not wish Mrs. White to see it, for he knew it would embarrass and distress her.⁴⁷

"It hurt me very much," he wrote, "to hear the unkind things that were said about Bro. Prescott and Bro. Conradi. . . . Poor Prescott was handled terribly." What worried the president most of all was that the mudslinging had been done "in the name" of Mrs. White and "on the authority of the hard things she said [about Prescott] here at the General Conference." Both J. S. Washburn and Edson White in particular had said "most cruel things" and vindicated themselves "by telling of their private interviews with your mother." Daniells considered this a "shockingly indiscrete" breach of confidence. "I would not have this get to Prescott for anything . . . it will stagger him and his friends."⁴⁸ The conflict over "the daily" was obviously getting out of hand.

By mid-1910 Mrs. White had heard enough of the "troublesome fad." She could not understand it, had no "instruction" on it, and could see "no need for the controversy." It was "not a subject of vital importance." In no way was it to be made a "test" of one's orthodoxy. And, furthermore, her writings were not to be used to settle the question either way. Contention should cease, she stated firmly in a general letter to the ministers involved. "At such a time silence is eloquence." The letter prompted W. C. White to have second thoughts on the wisdom of his advice to the General Conference men encouraging them to reply to the attacks made against them. He had now changed his mind, he reported to Daniells. His mother was very "decided in the conviction that it had been a mistake [the decision to reply]."⁴⁹

If they had made a mistake, W. C. White was not inclined to blame them. He knew that it was the "old view" supporters who had been the "unfair aggressors." It was primarily to these provocateurs that Mrs. White's letters applied, he stated. Furthermore, her instruction that her writings were not to be used to settle the matter was a plain denial of Haskell's major argument. Without the *Early Writings* statement there would have been no conflict to begin with.

Prescott would have had difficulty understanding that "the daily" was not an important issue. For him it was a basic hermeneutical key to Daniel 8. For him it opened the door to a much more meaningful Christological interpretation of Daniel's prophecies. But from Mrs. White's perspective, if the new interpretation resulted in a serious rift in the church, then other concerns became more important. By endeavoring to play down the issue, Mrs. White was not meaning that

truth was unimportant or that an idea was not worthwhile simply because it concerned the exegesis of only one verse. Her peace-making was prompted by the need for the church to preserve unity and to focus its energies on the evangelistic challenge facing it in 1910.

Just as personality and political issues muddled the waters of the Kellogg controversy, so did they in the dispute over "the daily." Leading men in the southern field had for a long time been dissatisfied with general administrative decisions emanating from Washington. How then, they questioned, could theological truth come out of Washington? Again, while most church leaders thoroughly enjoyed Prescott's confident, personal style, a minority thought him imperious and a confident know-it-all. If people reacted to Prescott, it tended to be a strong reaction either way. This did not help the cause of "the daily" either.

Prescott was an intellectual, an avant-garde committed to the pursuit of truth. Even while distracted by administrative assignments, he found time to pursue his study and to search for new insights. But he was also motivated by a strong evangelistic drive. Truth was for sharing. One might expect that his experience during the "righteousness by faith" debate of the 1890's would have made him more wary of the difficulties of educating a large community. Had he not learned that trying to change people's thinking was an enterprise fraught with hazards? Yes, he had, but for Prescott that was not a reason to give up trying. Besides, on this occasion, he was sure he had done the right thing and followed all the correct procedures in introducing the "new view" to the church. And he had. He was not without a strong sense of pastoral responsibility for the church. Nor was he unconcerned about church unity as illustrated by his protest that M. C. Wilcox, with his *Signs*, was going too fast in pushing the issue. True, by going more slowly, they would rock the boat less, but it was naive to think that the church could change its thinking without controversy.

"The daily" conflict illustrates perhaps that change in a church's thinking is achieved more by the passing away of a generation than it is by the present generation accepting the change. This "storm in a teacup" thus highlights the point that conflict is inevitable whenever change is proposed in the area of religion. It also illustrates the fact that, despite taking precaution and waiting for the proper time, there is probably never a time when a church is "ready" for change.

The conflict left scars on Prescott that never completely healed. The public, personal attacks, citing Mrs. White's alleged conversations, made him suspect by conservatives for the rest of his days. The conflict also caused many to be suspicious of the General Conference. A key union conference resisted attempts at organizational reform by the General Conference even twenty years later because of lingering resentment over "the daily" issue. There had been wisdom in the counsel to back away from the open conflict on the matter.

The passing of time ultimately vindicated Prescott's position. His interpretation of Dan. 8:11-13 eventually became the norm. Furthermore, the non-determinative role of Mrs. White in establishing the meaning of scripture was also settled, although not often remembered, as later conflicts in the church would make clear. Prescott may have felt unjustly treated by the events and the outcome of "the daily" conflict, but his experience with Mrs. White in the past had taught him the wisdom of submission even when he did not understand. He valued her counsel even when it was difficult to accept. Such an attitude helped him continue to be of use to the church.

Chapter 13

- ¹SNH to EGW, Jun. 30, 1907.
- ²ST, Jul. 15, 1841, p. 41; U. Smith, *Daniel and Revelation* (Battle Creek, 1892) pp. 159-161, 260-268.
- ³EGW, *Early Writings* (Washington, D. C., 1945 ed.), pp. 74-75.
- ⁴SNH to WCW, Dec. 6, 1909; SNH to EGW, Feb. 25, Dec. 29, 1908; SNH to CCC, Mar. 30, 1908.
- ⁵AGD to WCW, Jan. 3, 1910.
- ⁶WWP to LHC, Nov. 27, 1906; AGD to WCW, Mar. 30, 1910.
- ⁷WWP to LHC, Nov. 27, 1906; WAS to JSW, Feb. 6, 1910.
- ⁸J. Kolvoord & M. Kellogg, "The Vision of the Evening and the Morning..." (Battle Creek, 1907), pp. 21-34, 82-86.
- ⁹WWP to JNL, Dec. 12, 1907.
- ¹⁰SNH to WWP, Nov. 15, 1907.
- ¹¹WWP to CCC, Dec. 20, 1907.
- ¹²CCC to WWP, Dec. 14, 26, 27, 1907.
- ¹³Mrs SNH to AGD, Jan. 26, 1908.
- ¹⁴SNH to AGD, Jan. 27, 1908.
- ¹⁵WCW to WWP, Mar. 24, 1908.
- ¹⁶DWR to WAS, [Circular], 1908.
- ¹⁷AGD to CCC, Mar. 18, 1908.
- ¹⁸AGD to WCW, Mar. 18, 1908.
- ¹⁹WWP to CCC, May 1, 1908.
- ²⁰SNH to CCC, Apr. 13, 1908.
- ²¹AGD to IAF, Jul. 13, 1908.
- ²²SNH to EGW, Aug. 13, 1908.
- ²³WWP to SNH, Aug. 2, 1908.
- ²⁴RH, Aug. 27, 1908, p. 24; AGD to EA, Sep. 10, 1908; WWP to AGD, Aug. 28, 1908.
- ²⁵EGW to WWP, May 22, 1908.
- ²⁶WWP to AGD, Aug. 28, 1908.
- ²⁷WWP to WCW, Sep. 7, 1908.
- ²⁸Ibid.
- ²⁹WCW to WWP, Aug. 12, 1910.
- ³⁰WWP to WCW, Aug. 23, 1908.
- ³¹WCW to PTM, Jul. 31, 1910; EGW to SNH, Aug. 28, 1908.
- ³²WCW to ERP, Feb. 19, 1908; SNH to WCW, Oct. 8, 1907; Nov. 13, 1908; SNH to EGW, Nov. 6, 1907.
- ³³WCW to AGD, Mar. 22, 1908, cited in AGD to WCW, Jun. 25, 1908.
- ³⁴Ibid.
- ³⁵SNH to WCW, Oct. 22, 1908; SNH to EGW, Dec. 15, 1908.
- ³⁶AGD to WCW, Feb. 10, 1909.
- ³⁷O. A. Johnson, "The Daily: Is It Paganism?" [1909].
- ³⁸EGW, "A Message to Responsible Men..." Jun. 3, 1909.
- ³⁹EGW, "Proclaiming the Third Angel's Message..." Jun. 11, 1909; EGW to JEW, Jun. 16, 1909.
- ⁴⁰MCW to AGD, Sep. 28, 1909; GBS to AGD, Aug. 19, 1919.
- ⁴¹RHPA Bd Min, Jun. 15, 1909; GCC Min, Jun. 29, 1909; AGD to GBT Jun 29, 1909.
- ⁴²Mrs SNH to WAS, Sep. 22, 1909; SNH to WAS, Sep. 27, 1909.
- ⁴³WAS to GIB, Jul. 12, 1909; WAS to CPB, Jul. 8, 1909.
- ⁴⁴MCW to AGD, Nov. 14, 1909.
- ⁴⁵AGD to CFV, Dec. 2, 1909.
- ⁴⁶AGD to WCW, Dec. 20, 1909; Dec. 31, 1909; WCW to AGD, Jan. 11, 1909; Mar. 13, 1909.
- ⁴⁷AGD to WCW, Mar. 31, 1910.
- ⁴⁸Ibid.
- ⁴⁹WCW to AGD, Jul. 28, 1910.

Gilbert M. Valentine, *The Shaping of Adventism: The Case of W. W. Prescott* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1992), pp. 185-203, 293, 294.

APPENDIX XLVI

**LETTER FROM HOPE INTERNATIONAL TO ROBERT S. FOLKENBERG
LETTER FROM ROBERT S. FOLKENBERG TO HOPE INTERNATIONAL**

Hope International

Box 940
Eatonville, WA 98328
(206) 832-6602

September 17, 1992

Kenneth R. Hodges, Chairman
Administrative Committee
Hope International

Eld. Robert S. Folkenberg, President
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904

Dear Eld. Folkenberg,

On behalf of Elders Ron Spear and Clark Floyd as well as of myself and the other Hope International staff, I would like to thank you for the opportunity you gave us recently to establish badly needed communication between your office and ours. If we are both serious about our stated goals and objectives to finish the work God has entrusted to the Seventh-day Adventist Church then hopefully we can find a way to set aside any differences and work together toward the accomplishment of this common goal.

Communication, vital as it is in establishing foundational understandings on which to base relationships, is of lasting value only as it results in improved relationships. We feel that our meeting with you was very constructive to this end. I apologize for our having to end our discussion with you so abruptly in order to get Ron to the airport.

Our time together was much shorter than the list of issues we would like to have addressed. For this reason I want to take this opportunity to clarify some of our positions and to respond to some of the concerns you expressed.

We appreciate having had an opportunity to share with you our reason for requesting an appointment with you. As we stated, our reason was primarily to discuss with you the concerns you and your administration have regarding the activities of Hope International. You began the meeting by stating that the major concern, one that overshadowed such issues as tithes, baptism and ordination, was with how we approached problems in the church. You indicated that you were familiar with the problems we addressed and that your desire to see these problems solved equaled and probably exceeded our desire to see them solved. I did not understand you to be ducking the real issues that Hope International has been trying to address for you neither said that they did not exist nor did you indicate that the problems were of our own making.

This is to us at Hope an important point in our mutual communication process not because we want to be vindicated or proven correct but because we now see expressed a mature understanding of the concerns we have been burdened to address. This offers

us hope that we can work together toward an amicable solution to whatever differences we may have.

We recognize that we have been, and still are, perceived by many in church leadership as being "a pain". In response let me affirm that if Pain could feel frustration then we at Hope can understand the frustration that Pain would surely feel when it repeatedly tries to communicate to the brain that there is a problem in a certain part of the body only to be repeatedly silenced by a pain pill. Pain is being blamed for the discomfort for which it is not responsible. Since Pain is a part of the body it has just as much at stake in the neglect of the problem as does the brain. Pain desperately wants the brain to address the problem for Pain too would like to stop hurting. It desires this as much as does the mind. Rather than applying a pain killer, a more mature brain response would be to address the condition or conditions responsible for creating the hurt. Pain is not in a position to cure the problem. It can only indicate that a problem exists.

We appreciate, Elder Folkenberg, your desire to identify the cause for pain rather than simply to silence pain or to mask the conditions it implies. Life and health for the body can only be maintained if life-threatening conditions are remedied.

If I understand you correctly then, your main problem with our endeavors at Hope has to do with methodology. As an illustration of proper methodology for addressing problems you cited an article you had written that was designed to address certain problems that exist in one of our institutions. Your point was that as part of the "doctorate degree in experience" that you have earned since becoming General Conference President you have learned that merely identifying a problem is not enough. Only identifying falls far short of remedying. We could not agree more.

I understood you to say that in many instances merely identifying a problem without offering a solution for that problem can actually make the problem worse because it tends to incriminate the innocent with the guilty. In an organization it can worsen the problem by causing a general distrust of the leadership of the organization. You said that during a discussion of your article with others in leadership you were convinced that a better approach would be for you to sit down with the leaders of the institution involved and identify with them the problems, then suggest balanced solutions to remedy the problems. You intimated that it would be wise for us to consider this approach to problems within the church. To this we responded by saying that we were part of a reaction to a problem that we had not been given authority to oversee. Yes, we are part of the body that is suffering the pain, but we are not the brain. We cannot make a decision which will remedy the problem. We are merely a part of the body being affected by the brain's decisions. Other than reacting to the decisions of the brain as they affect us we can do nothing. If the brain decides for the body to drink alcohol, for example, and the liver is damaged all pain can do is notify the brain that the liver is being destroyed and along with it the rest of the body. Hopefully this information will result in a change in the brain's decisions. Hopefully it will recognize that the alcohol is destroying the whole body and cease allowing it to be admitted to the body.

If a system were put in place whereby we could sit down with church leadership and suggest solutions to the problems in the church that are affecting us, our families and our churches, we would gladly welcome this opportunity. This would surely be a better,

more effective way of working with the body to remedy its problems. We want to communicate better with leadership to this end, so if you are offering us the opportunity that the leaders of the institution you had concerns with offered you we accept. We would view this as an opportunity, such as you had with this institution, to together analyze the problems and figure out workable solutions.

If, however, you are not offering us this opportunity then the example you gave is not applicable to us. To suggest that we cease communicating regarding any legitimate problem that is affecting the body of which we are a part is to turn a deaf ear to information that could ultimately prevent the death of the whole body. To suggest that a system is already in place to facilitate such communication, be it a local church or conference, would simply be totally inaccurate. As was mentioned in our conversation the local conference in which we at Hope International live, refuses to even allow staff members of Hope to transfer membership within the conference. Not only does this action not accord with the instructions in the church manual regarding the authority vested in a local conference, it illustrates well the dilemma we face, a dilemma which many other SDAs are facing both in North America and throughout the world field. It is this type of dilemma that is responsible for much of the division occurring within the church at all levels.

In recent years information that was not appreciated because it did not support the direction that a very determined leadership was bent on going has been stymied and/or cut off. When you dam a stream does that stop water from flowing? Obviously not. The water simply goes a different direction. The existence of Hope International is proof of this less than profound fact.

I am most encouraged to see that you have the maturity and wisdom to know that as leader you must not war against the fact that water is flowing. You must instead direct the water to flow in a direction which will best achieve the objectives of the organization which you serve.

The best point I would like to make is that the information that we have been offering to the church is not useless, divisive criticism. The information which has been flowing from our group has been offering legitimate spiritual hunger of the SDA church members. We have been offering practical, Bible and Spirit of Prophecy based advice on spiritual living in areas such as courtship, family life, diet and health, dress, education, recreation and the Sabbath, the immortality of the soul, the sanctuary and the three angels' messages. We have ever striven to uplift Jesus as the great center of all our beliefs and to express the everlasting Gospel of forgiveness and regeneration through Him. We have held up God's law as the law of life for all "who will live godly in Christ Jesus." In addition it has been our policy and practice to encourage all Seventh-day Adventists to read the scriptures and yearly indexes to our articles you will perhaps get a better idea of our focus at our focus. While we have published warnings about such things as the flow of life, our focus is ever been to aid people in preparing to be ready for the heavenly kingdom at Christ's imminent return.

We have found that this material is meeting legitimate spiritual hunger of SDA people who are only sporadically being fed these things from either the pulpit or the printed page. This is not meant as a critical statement but rather a statement of fact. We are not the *National Inquirer* of the SDA church, nor does our financial survival depend on our uncovering the latest scam or problem in the church. Just a casual reading of *Our Firm Foundation* magazine would allow any interested party to learn that we have pledged ourselves to uplift the unique truths which we have been entrusted to our SDA church. We admit to having made a few bad decisions with regard to printing articles or saying things that were not well-timed or well-suited to the circumstances. But these exceptions are certainly not reflective of our goals and objectives. They are simply the result of poor judgment. Our stated editorial pledge has been to address principles and general practices rather than to deal with personalities or specific past or present mistakes someone may have made. Should our goals or policies reflect something that is out of harmony with God's will, then we would feel an apology should be made and changes implemented.

But as is evident from the attached information, our goals have always been to uplift Jesus from the perspective of the unique truths which have been entrusted to this church. These we have ever maintained as not cause for apology or embarrassment. They offer this last generation a necessary experience that must be received if we will at last be translated.

I was very pleased to hear you espouse these truths and to learn that you feel we "have been reading off (your) notes." But, sadly, we both had to admit, that not all who profess Adventism and stand in our pulpits each week or write in our papers or teach in our schools believe these truths. We would be less than honest with ourselves if we did not admit to there having been a very concerted aggressive effort to change the beliefs of the SDA church.

You admitted to having been exposed to some of this yourself while at the seminary. I make mention of this only in addressing the outcry that Elder McClure mentioned your office has been getting from pastors, conference presidents and union presidents in NAD, especially those who say that Hope is responsible for splitting their churches. I don't doubt but what this is being said, but I pray that you both have enough wisdom, understanding and spiritual perception to know that while we are part of a reaction we are only reacting, as are many in the SDA church, to an aggressive attempt to change the beliefs of this church. For this crime we are willing to answer to God. But God help those pastors, teachers and authors who necessitated this reaction by their theology and then have had the gall to demand that a position be taken against Hope because we, along with many other balanced SDA laity, didn't sit quietly in church and take it.

We can appreciate that our reaction has played a part in making the jobs of church administrators on all levels more difficult. We recognize that had none of the laity expressed any concern over what has been taking place in the SDA church then things would have gone much smoother. But would we have been any closer to the kingdom? Is the purpose of Adventism to make the jobs of church administrators easy at the expense of stalling Christ's second coming? If so we have truly failed the church and we would owe both it and God an apology.

But we believe, and I have reason to think you do too, that the only ones who owe the church an apology, the ones who have truly been responsible for the division in the church, are those who have bent their energies toward trying to change the truths God has entrusted to our keeping.

We thank you very much for the time you spent with us and we are very encouraged by your appreciation of the importance of the issues we are endeavoring to address. We trust we can both continue putting forth the energy needed to improve our future relationships and communications. God bless you in your leadership in this and all areas of our Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Yours for a finished work,

Kenneth R. Hodges

Kenneth R. Hodges

Enclosures: Material for enclosure with Hope International dossier (sample articles and indexes to articles showing titles), included in response to your invitation to do so. We would be pleased for this letter to be included also.

CC: Elder Al McClure
Elder Bob Dale
Elder Bob Jacobs

PS: This letter is being faxed to you Sunday, September 20, 1992. The other information was sent to you via UPS Overnight Mail on Friday, September 18th.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT



General Conference of

Seventh-day Adventists

CHURCH WORLD HEADQUARTERS • 12501 OLD COLUMBIA PIKE, SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND
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September 23, 1992

Mr. Kenneth R. Hodges, Chairman
Administrative Committee
Hope International
Box 940
Eatonville WA 98328

Dear Brother Hodges:

Thank you for your letter responding to our visit of September 15 with you, Clark Floyd, and Ron Spear. As I read it and reflect on your response, I find myself encouraged but in other ways disappointed. It seems to me that contacts such as this are valuable, for we will not make progress unless we are in good communication with one another. I am always ready to become involved in whatever will genuinely advance the work of God.

I appreciated the nonconfrontational atmosphere that prevailed and sensed that the Holy Spirit was at work in our meeting. My colleagues and I tried to demonstrate our openness during the discussion while at the same time outlining in specific terms areas where tensions have developed between the work of Hope International and the organized church. I believe there are solutions to these problems, and it is the Lord's will that we find them and put them in place. As you observed, our discussion was brought to a premature conclusion by Ron's need to meet his plane. I wish we could have carried forward some of the questions that were only introduced.

We heard you describe Hope International's self-understanding as seeking to bring revival and reform to the Adventist church. In clear words I tried to assure you that we are painfully aware of shortcomings among God's people, ourselves included, and our purpose is to set in place all we can do to meet the needs of the church. The Lord expects that of us. Furthermore, we have identified specific areas of concern and are taking steps which I believe will lead to some solutions. Our vision of what God's people need is in many ways like yours. Both the organized church and Hope International trust the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy for guidance and look forward to Jesus' soon return.

We want to use every available means to help our people attain both the certainty of salvation afforded us in Jesus as well as the overcoming power of Christ promised in our lives. This we need personally, collectively, and in our institutions as well. We believe

Hope International
September 23, 1992

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that a renewed commitment must take place among God's people, but He would have our efforts toward change take a redemptive form rather than denunciation. Christ came to seek and save people, not simply to condemn evil.

In the interest of Christian candor, I need to relay to you some things in your response that disappointed me. One is a bit difficult to state succinctly but perhaps can be described as a negotiatory tone rather than genuine cooperation that follows real sharing of goals. If this honestly remains, I fear we have missed an important point in our discussions.

I sense that Hope International has set itself not simply to preach truth and truth alone, but to do so in contrast to the failings of the organized church. Painting the church at large with the sins of the few leads only to division and distrust and is not redemptive. As a result loyal pastors and teachers, who are preaching our full message, find some in their flock developing a judgmental spirit.

This mentality will keep us at cross purposes. Merely informing one another of our programs is not constructive communication. A pooling of efforts, thoroughly integrated with the church's work, is the way a group moves from the spirit of independence to a truly supportive position.

We have to recognize that quite substantial tensions exist between Hope International and church leaders. They have not been generated over theological issues, including what are called straight testimonies, nearly as much as from Hope's setting its positions in contrast to others--the implication being that others do not really teach the Adventist message. This comes across not only as more holy than thou, but as a put-down of what the church is working urgently to accomplish. The end result is a steady undermining of confidence in leaders of the church while at the same time not really bringing needed change to the church as a whole. In the end members find themselves pressed to choose between the work of Hope International and that of the organized body of believers.

No amount of professing loyalty to the church can overcome this problem, Ken. It will take some serious attention. I want to accept the sincerity of Hope International's leaders and workers, and I hope you reject the sectarian thrust I have described, but in your response I do not see a serious addressing of this problem, which for me is disappointing. May I appeal to you. Preach the truth as it is in Jesus. Preach all the distinctive aspects of the message we know and love. Let truth stand on its own. Please don't, directly or indirectly, overtly or by innuendo, present Hope International as the expositor of truth in contrast to the organized church.

As you have said, God intends His people to be an organized movement, dedicated to carrying His message to all the world. We have undertaken this enormous assignment in the knowledge that it lies far beyond us but in His strength the work will be completed.

Hope International
September 23, 1992

Page 3

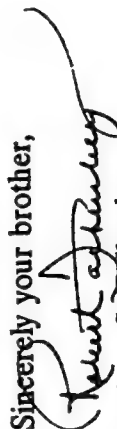
We are held responsible to do all in our power to give faithful leadership to His people, and we ask all to join hands with us to build trust and unity.

We are serious about the gravity of our assignment, but when we see articles in Our Firm Foundation asserting that the church is in deep apostasy, at the same time doing little or nothing to uphold the hands of those struggling to carry out God's commission, inevitably we see problems. I had hoped that in your response you would distance yourselves from this kind of activity.

We remain committed to openness and dedicate our every effort to work with those whose work supports the work of the organized church. Jesus Christ is our Lord and guide as well as our Savior. We continue to pray that the near future will bring Hope International and the church into close working harmony. We welcome the work of supportive organizations. As you give leadership to the future course of Hope International, we look forward to steps to resolving the difficulties that have divided us.

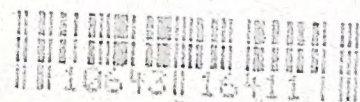
You have our prayers. We long for a level of trust and helpfulness that will lead to a more rapid finish of the work of God and the return of Jesus.

Sincerely your brother,


Robert S. Folkenberg
President



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